Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky

Elder and Exorcist

A Collection of Materials

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Broad Overview

- **6 May 1929 – Born in the village of Humnyska, Busk District, into the family of Ivan and Kseniia. The family had six children, three of whom died in early childhood. Thus, three remained: Mykhailo, Vasyl (the future priest and Studite monk), and Yurii (currently the Eparch of Sambir–Drohobych of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church).**
- **1935 – Entered the local school, where he completed six grades. He completed the seventh grade in Busk.**
- **1938 – The Redemptorist Fathers conducted missions in the village of Humnyska. During these missions, Vasyl Voronovskyi decided to become a missionary priest.**
- **1942 – Entered the Minor Theological Seminary in Lviv, immediately enrolling in the third year.**
- **1945 – After the closure of the Minor Seminary, he continued his studies at the Busk Secondary School.**
- **1948 – Enrolled at Ivan Franko Lviv State University, Faculty of German Philology. During his studies, he maintained contact with Greek Catholic clergy, who were forced underground following the Lviv pseudo-synod of 1946.**
- **1953–1970 – Worked as a teacher of German and English, as well as mathematics and physics, in the villages of Sernyky (1 year), Holohory (5 years), Velykosilky, and Kyzyliv (11 years).**
- **14 August 1959 – Received diaconal ordination from His Grace Bishop Ivan Sleziuk.**
- **15 August 1959 – His Grace Bishop Ivan Sleziuk ordained Vasyl Voronovskyi to the priesthood.**
- **16 August 1959 – Celebrated his First Divine Liturgy in the church in the village of Kulychkiv, near Belz.**
- **1965 – Entered the underground Studite monastery, whose Archimandrite was the underground bishop Nikanor Deineha.**
- **27 September 1970 – On the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, he received the Schema from Archimandrite Nikanor Deineha, taking the new monastic name Volodymyr.**
- **Years of the underground Church – Hieromonk Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi courageously carried out pastoral ministry as an underground**

priest, primarily throughout various regions of Galicia, particularly in the villages of Khlopchytsi and Dobriany.

- **12 February 1970 – First arrest of Hieromonk Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi for baptizing children at the Fiina hamlet (near Krekhiv).**
- **1976 – Hieromonk Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi received permission from Bishop Vasyl Velychkovskyi to perform exorcisms. This permission was later confirmed by Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk.**
- **12 February 1985 – Second arrest for hearing a confession at 34 Holovatskoho Street in Lviv.**
- **1 December 1989 – Third arrest for the public celebration of a service in the village of Khlopchytsi.**
- **1992–1996 – Lecturer in Church Typikon and spiritual director at the Holy Spirit Lviv Theological Seminary.**
- **Years of freedom – Hieromonk Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi preached missions throughout nearly the entire territory of Ukraine and abroad (Poland, Italy). An integral part of all his missions was prayer for healing.**
- **6 May 2004 – Received a special blessing on the occasion of his 75th birthday from Pope John Paul II of blessed memory.**
- **21 July 2010 – Received the Great Schema from the hands of his own brother, His Grace Bishop Yulian Voronovskyi, taking the name Vasyl.**
- **31 July 2010 – Fell asleep in the Lord at 5:40 a.m.**

Short Biography

Vasyl Voronovskyi was born on 6 May 1929 in the village of Humnyska, Busk district, Lviv region, to Ivan and Ksenia. The family had six children, three of whom (Anna, Pylyp, and Pavlo) died at an early age. Mykhailo, Vasyl (future priest and Studite monk), and Yurii (Bishop of Sambir-Drohobych of the UGCC, Julian) remained. In the family, he received a good religious upbringing, as well as a remarkable intellectual education, as his mother Ksenia, a graduate of the gymnasium, tried to instil in her children a love of God and science. In 1935, Vasyl Voronovskyi began his studies at the local six-year school in Humnyske, graduating successfully in 1941. After that, he studied for another year in the 7th grade in Busk. The end of his schooling coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War, which crippled many talented children. However, Vasyl, as a young man, already knew which way he wanted to go. The vocation to the priestly ministry permeated his whole being. The impetus for this was the missions he took part in as a child and which he often recalled later. *'When we had a mission in 1938, the Redemptorist priests gave us two weeks, so I went to all the sermons (...). Just as those missionaries preached and made converts, I decided to consecrate myself to God and become a missionary priest. Maybe even my parents wanted me to get married, but I had*

no desire to get married. Since childhood, I had this urge to be a priest.'

Knowing about Vasyl's intention to become a priest, his father Ivan tried to properly prepare his son for this ministry. So his father invited a private teacher, Kalynevych, who taught Vasyl basic knowledge of classical languages - Greek and Latin, as well as Old Slavonic. So, when Vasyl entered the Minor Theological Seminary in Lviv in 1942, he was immediately accepted to the third year of his studies. Studying at the seminary was perhaps the best time for young Vasyl, as he fondly recalled later. Prayer, study, good discipline, acquaintance with the then luminaries of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church - all this hardened and prepared the young man for the difficult times of the communist totalitarian regime that were steadily approaching. *'I think I visited Metropolitan Sheptytsky three times on St Andrew's Day. Mostly everyone went from the seminary. At first, we all stood and sang 'Many Years' to him (...) then everyone came up, kissed his hand, and took his blessing. Even though he was paralysed, in a wheelchair, they brought him and he taught us.'*

The year 1945 was the first major test for Vasyl Voronovskyi on his way to the priesthood. It was then that the communist occupation regime disbanded the Minor Theological Seminary. The young 16-year-old faced a difficult choice: to flee to Rome, as many of his comrades did, or to remain in the occupied but native land. Due to interesting circumstances, namely the persistence of his father's sister, who lived in Lviv, Vasyl Voronovskyi stayed in Ukraine and tried to look for

opportunities to fulfil his desire to become a priest. Privately, he continues to be in active contact with the Greek Catholic clergy, who were driven underground by the Soviet authorities in 1946 through the Lviv Pseudo-Council, and publicly he continues his studies at Busk Secondary School. After completing his secondary education (10 grades), Vasyl Voronovskyi entered the Ivan Franko State University of Lviv, Department of German Philology. However, a year later, he had to transfer to part-time studies, as the occupying Soviet authorities began to persecute his parents, threatening them with exile to Siberia for their sons' "disobedient" activities. Under such circumstances, Vasyl started teaching while continuing his studies at the university.

'My first job was in Sernyky. It was in the Bibrskyi district, Lviv region, for one year. And then I transferred closer to Zolochiv district, to the village of Holohory. I taught there for 5 years. There I had to teach German, mathematics in grades 5-6, and physics. So there was a shortage of teachers. Then I transferred from that Holohirsk secondary school to Velykosilky, now Zhelukhiv. It was in the Kamianka-Buzka district. I also taught English and German there. I even taught history. To be closer to my home, to get to Humnysk, and there was a place at the Kizliv school, I transferred to Kizliv. I worked at the Kizlivka school for 11 years. Even though that Kizliv school was moved to Myliatyn. (...) I was already teaching there, too: I taught German and English.'

Although Vasyl Voronovskyi was sincerely devoted to teaching, his desire to become a priest was something he lived for every minute. Thanks to contacts with such luminaries of the

underground Greek Catholic Church as Bishop Nykanor Deyneha, Mykola Charnetskyi, Vasyl Velychkovskyi, and priests Mykhailo Vynnytskyi and Mykhailo Lemishka, Vasyl Voronovskyi supplemented his knowledge of theology and passed the relevant exams. The first date of Vasyl's ordination was set for 7 April 1959, on the feast of the Annunciation. Bishop Mykola Charnetskyi was to be the celebrant. However, it was on this day that the bishop passed away. And when Vasyl Voronovsky arrived, people were already returning from the funeral. This was the next strong test for him, which even provoked a wave of doubts: ***'I began to think that there was no one to ordain me, there was no bishop - everyone was in prison, and my dream of becoming a priest would not come true, although I tried to pray to the Holy Virgin every day, asking God to help me become a priest. Maybe one day he did not refuse? I was advised to go to Zakarpattia to see a bishop to be ordained. But I never went there. I thought: 'I'll go, he doesn't know me, and how can I go and (say): ''Ordain me as a priest?''***

And yet the Lord has always been like a loving Father to Vasyl, holding his hand and not letting him get discouraged. On 14 August 1959, His Grace Bishop Ivan Sleziuk ordained Vasyl Voronovskyi as a deacon, and the next day, on Saturday, 15 August of the same year, on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the Gregorian calendar, he ordained Vasyl to the priesthood. The only person in his family who knew about Vasyl's ordination was his brother, Fr Julian Voronovskyi. His parents, as well as other relatives, learnt about this event later. The young Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi

celebrated his first Divine Liturgy on Sunday, 16 August 1959, in a church in the village of Kulychkiv, near Belz. The Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, and even Kyiv regions were the main areas where the young and zealous priest had to sow the seed of faith in the souls of those who had been denied access to the church by the communist regime.

In 1937, as the thirteenth child in a family, Joseph, the uncle of Fr Vasyl Voronovsky, entered the Studite monastery in Univ, taking the name Januarius at the Schism. After him, in 1957, Fr Vasyl's own brother Yurii Voronovskyi also decided to enter the underground Studite monastery, whose archimandrite at the time was Bishop Nykanor Deyneha. Following the example of his father and brother, Fr Vasyl also decided to take the path of monastic life. However, he did not do so without internal difficulties. What were those difficulties? Here are Fr Vasyl's own recollections of them: ***'I told (Archimandrite Nykanor) that I love missions (and Studites do not conduct missions). And (he) said to me: 'Why don't Studites do missions? Because there are not enough priests. Andrey Sheptytsky restored the Order, but in Univ there were only nine priests, and they serve 220 monks. And if there are many monks-priests, then Studite monks will do missions.'*** **After hearing this answer from Archimandrite Nykanor, Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi entered the Studite monastery in 1965, underwent underground monastic formation, and on 27 September 1970, on the feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Holy Cross, took the Little Schema with the monastic name Volodymyr. For more than 20 years, Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi combined his priestly and monastic vocation with teaching. During the day he worked at the**

school, at night or in the early hours of the morning he served the Liturgy and, whenever possible, the Church Rule. During all this time, he served many localities as a priest, being permanently attached to the villages of Dobriany and Khlopchytsi. The daily Divine Liturgies, the many faithful who came to confession and communion, and the requests for baptisms and marriages, constantly gave Fr Vasyl even more fervour in his ministry.

Such an energetic and zealous ministry of the young Greek Catholic priest could not go unnoticed by the state security services of the time. On 12 February 1970, on the feast day of the Three Saints, Fr Vasyl was arrested for the first time in the village of Fiyna, near Krekhiv. The main accusation against Fr Voronovskyi was that, in addition to celebrating the Divine Liturgy, he confessed and baptised children. After that, Fr Vasyl was arrested twice more: On 12 February 1985 in Lviv (34 Holovatskoho Street) and on 1 December 1989 in the village of Khlopchytsi. However, the first arrest was the most difficult, as Fr Vasyl often returned to it in his memoirs because it involved torture. At the same time, he never mentioned his persecutors with an evil word, but asked the Lord for the grace of conversion to the faith of Christ. 'I have often thought that this is God's permission. If the Church had been united, maybe this would not have happened. And God allowed the atheists to come to power, and the Church that destroyed the Greek Catholic Church, the true Church, then God allowed it. (...) Therefore, if people turn to God now, I believe that peace will reign, and we only need to pray that

God will grant mercy so that people will know the true faith, the one that Christ gave us.'
During the time of the underground, Hieromonk Myron Derenyuk lived in the catacomb monastery in the village of Dora in Ivano-Frankivsk region. He was a well-known exorcist among the Studite monks. After his death in 1976, Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi became the one who took on the heavy burden of this special priestly ministry. Prayers for the sick and exorcisms became an integral part of his vocation. Already then, Fr Vasyl began to be associated among the people as an exorcist priest who helps people to free themselves from the clutches of the evil spirit and take the path of service to the Lord.

The end of the 80s in occupied Ukraine was dawning with rays of freedom. Feeling this, Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi intensified his priestly missionary activity. Through his sermons, teachings, and prayers, he tried to raise his church and people from their knees. In times of freedom, the main place where Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi usually stayed was the monastery church of St Michael the Archangel in Lviv. It was here that the father lived, worked, and prayed. At the same time, throughout the almost 20-year period of Ukraine's independence, Fr Vasyl travelled on missions to many parts of Ukraine, as well as to some European countries where a large number of Ukrainian emigrants are concentrated (in particular, Poland and Italy). In addition, from 1992 to 1997, he taught Church Regulations and was a confessor at the Lviv Theological Seminary of the Holy Spirit, which was just beginning to resume its activities.

The pastoral visit of John Paul II to Ukraine in June 2001 was a turning point in the life of Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi during the period of Ukraine's independence. In his sermons, Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi sincerely acknowledged that this visit was an expression of recognition for him and a sign that all the suffering of the suffering Greek Catholic Church was not in vain.

The time of Ukraine's independence was for Msgr. Vasyl Voronovskyi the period of his greatest labour in the spiritual field. He travelled everywhere on missions, preaching and teaching spirituality. The only goal to which he tried to lead people was the true Christian life and unity with God. That is why, in all his sermons, the father encouraged people to live a virtuous life so that 'we could see God in heaven after death'. The ability to behold God was the goal of Fr Vasyl's life, which he gladly shared with others.
In due time, the Merciful Lord began to bring Fr. Vasyl to this goal. On 27 December 2006, during a medical examination, he was diagnosed with a malignant tumour. Since then, Father Vasyl has undergone several operations, which, by the will of the Lord and with the help of benefactors, have slightly prolonged his life. On 6 May 2009, Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi celebrated his 80th birthday, on which occasion His Beatitude Patriarch Lubomyr Husar awarded him a certificate. Despite his poor health, he served his people with missions and sermons to the last, just as he had once resolved before his ordination as a priest. In July 2010, the health of Fr. Vasyl's health began to decline. Sensing the hour of his passing to the

Lord, the father often repeated: 'Probably already at the age of 82, God wants to take me to Himself. I have not lived my life in vain, because I have baptised so many people, given marriages and missions. So, I am very grateful to God for everything.'

In the last days of his earthly journey, Hieromonk Volodymyr-Vasyl Voronovskyi asked to be granted the Great Schema. On 21 July 2010, his own brother, Bishop and Archimandrite Julian Voronovskyi, conferred on him the rank of the Great Angelic Image, restoring to him the name of his patron saint from baptism, St Basil the Great. No longer able to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Basil took part in the liturgy, which was celebrated daily by Bishop Julian until the end of his days. On 31 July 2010, at the hour of 5:40 a.m. in the monastery chapel of the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent, Fr Vasyl Voronovskyi went to the Lord, whom he so fervently desired to see!

Testimonies

ArticleI I:

“To render true honor to Fr. Vasyl means to take him as an example and to imitate him.”
— Bishop Venedykt

Holy persons manifest God. We know much and read much about the lives of the saints, yet popular wisdom rightly says: “It is better to see once than to hear seven times.” When a person encounters holy individuals, it is as though he encounters God Himself: “Wondrous is God in His saints,” we sing in our liturgical services; “O Holy God, who abides in the saints,” we pray in the prayer of the Divine Liturgy. When we speak of Father Vasyl, we mean a man who above all sought and desired

God and the will of God. The essential point was not that he read prayers of exorcism, but that wherever he appeared, he made God present. Only a person who has acquired an experience of God can pass it on to others. In the world, only one who has personally experienced God can be a witness of God. Holy persons live so deeply in God, and have so fully cultivated their spiritual life, that they live by it alone. A holy person receives everything as given by God, as something proper and fitting. Often our mind, like a small computer, cannot comprehend all the programs of God.

Whatever may happen in life, a holy person sees God in all of it; therefore, through constant trust in God, such a person prays unceasingly.
"...the strength of Father Vasyl lay in the simplicity of his faith. Christ said: 'Be like children.' I recall how Fr. Vasyl once said that when he serves the Liturgy, he is aware that angels are standing beside him. This is not proof that he saw angels, but a testimony that he truly lived by faith. The phenomenon of Father Vasyl does not lie in the fact that he was an exemplary monk, an exorcist, or a benefactor, but in the fact that he was in God. His being in God gave him the strength to do everything else.

Closeness to God enabled Fr. Voronovskyi to sense where God wanted and needed him. Father Vasyl faithfully fulfilled this obedience to God. He always listened attentively to the needs of God and of people. This is possible only when a person, like Mary (from the parable of Mary and Martha), sits at the feet of the Savior and contemplates Him, rather than being anxious like Martha. When one truly contemplates God, one understands what He expects from him at each particular moment of life."

"...Sociological studies confirm that people are divided into two categories: those who say they were once happy, and those who hope to become happy someday. Herein lies the problem—people do not feel happy in the present moment. Father Vasyl Voronovskyi always knew how to be happy. Despite living underground, working hard, and suffering

illness, he was able to value every moment of his life. He understood each moment as a unique page that would never be repeated. When you are with God, everything becomes precious, because everything is sent by God. We constantly undergo tests of our spiritual maturity, and often we simply 'fail' them. This happens because we do not know how to live through and experience our problems in God." — Bishop Venedykt

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi always said that if one has some misfortune or sorrow, one should for nine consecutive months, on the first Saturday of each month, go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, and pray the Rosary to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. To those whose small child was ill, Fr. Vasyl advised first of all to go to Confession and Holy Communion, and only then to pray sincerely to the Mother of God, who is a bridge to Jesus and who obtains God's graces. The priest himself prayed four to five rosaries every day. He always said that the rosary is a ladder to heaven. He also advised prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Fiftieth Psalm.
(From the testimonies of Mrs. Neonila Paikush.)

"I am convinced that this was a man through whom the Lord God acted. I believe that today all of us, our entire Church, has a powerful intercessor, mediator, and prayerful advocate for us all."
— His Beatitude Sviatoslav

Article II:

“On January 7 we will celebrate the Nativity of Christ and glorify Jesus. In the communist state people were convinced that Christ never existed, that He was merely a fairy tale. My dear ones, I want to tell you that Jesus is a historical person, not a mythical one. Humanity awaited His coming for 450 years,” says Father Vasyl Voronovskyi, aged 80, during a divine service at the Greek Catholic Church of Saint Michael the Archangel in Lviv.

Priest Vasyl Voronovskyi presented holy oil to Yushchenko

“On January 7 we will celebrate the Nativity of Christ and glorify Jesus. In the communist state people were convinced that Christ never existed, that it was a fairy tale. My dear ones, I want to tell you that Jesus is a historical person, not a mythical one. Humanity awaited His coming for 450 years,” says Father Vasyl Voronovskyi, aged 80, during a divine service at the Greek Catholic Church of Saint Michael the Archangel in Lviv.

This year Father Voronovskyi marked the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood. For forty years he has been engaged in exorcism—casting out evil spirits and healing the sick. In the past, he celebrated services in cities throughout Ukraine. In August he underwent surgery on his intestines and urinary bladder. He lives in a monastic cell at the Monastery of Saint Michael the Archangel. We speak with the priest in the guest room.

Father Vasyl, how should Christmas be celebrated properly?

— Jesus Christ had twelve Apostles. In their remembrance, on Christmas Eve Christians prepare twelve dishes. They must be meatless: whether borscht or varenyky—everything without meat or butter, prepared with oil. On that evening we bear mourning, showing that we remember the death of Jesus on the Cross. On Christmas Day one must attend the Divine Liturgy. Before that, during the forty-day fast, people should go to Confession and receive Holy Communion, so that on the day of His birth Jesus may bless them. If a person does not confess even once a year, he ceases to be a Christian.

On Christmas Eve people place garlic on the table to be healthy, and bring chickens into the house so that the household may prosper. Does the Church approve of such beliefs?

— That is permissible. From ancient times people believed in such signs. These traditions are not sinful. I myself place hay and garlic under the tablecloth on Christmas Eve.

You have healed people for many years. With what problems do parishioners most often come to you?

— They come with headaches and influenza, and with cancer. But most often—people possessed by an evil spirit. It is evident that they have committed sin and have not repented. Often they come with children who scream, do not sleep, and are ill. Once they brought me a six-year-old child who did not speak. I read prayers over the child and anointed the throat and mouth with blessed oil. The child ran into the corridor and said something to the mother. Sin is passed on to children from parents and grandparents. Children up to the age of seven are given Communion without

Confession. Older ones must confess. They also bring alcoholics and drug addicts to me. They too are dependent on the devil. I pray for them.

All people are born with sin, even Popes and bishops. Only the Sacrament of Baptism washes away sin. For sins committed, a person must repent. If one wishes to ask God's forgiveness, one must make a sincere confession.

Sometimes people come who are simply mentally unwell. Five years ago, a man from Ternopil came to see me. There were seven priests in the church, but he wanted to confess only to me. During the confession he struck me in the eye with his fist. He was taken to a psychiatric hospital and released the next day. After that incident, I began to see poorly with one eye.

When did you realize that you were able to heal?

— Sometime in the 1960s I prayed over a child who was screaming. The child recovered. In 1970 the bishop gave me permission to cast out evil spirits. The devil is a spirit that can sometimes be seen or heard. Most often he appears in the form of fire. In one house in Komarno (a town in the Horodok District of Lviv Region — *GPU*), fire began to appear for no apparent reason. They poured water on it, but the flames flared up again. When I arrived in the town, words appeared on the wall of the house: *"Do not call the priest, or I will take revenge."* I served the blessing of water and read the prayers of exorcism. That same day, six couples who had been living together without church marriage came to me to be crowned in marriage. In a house where people are not married in church, the devil can also take up residence.

Before performing an exorcism, I fast. I recall how they once brought me a young woman who had been dancing on New Year's Eve, saw a demon, and became mute. After prayer, she began to speak. The next day I woke up and wanted to speak, but no sound came out. The spirit of muteness had passed to me. I prayed, and everything went away.

I myself suffered from cancer and underwent six operations, yet I never prayed for myself. For my healing, thanks are due to the people who prayed for me. In thanksgiving to God, I traveled to Jerusalem and walked through all the holy places.

Are you not afraid to deal with unclean forces?

— I always wear the Holy Mysteries on my chest. Nevertheless, the devil interfered with me several times. I was going to cast out an evil spirit, approached my car, and the rear tire shattered into small pieces; then the alarm went off. But I was not afraid.

People often turn to fortune-tellers who pour melted wax, supposedly removing the evil eye and fear. How do you view this?

— I have never advised anyone to go to people who pour wax. One must not practice divination with wax. Modern fortune-tellers often convince people that their misfortunes arose because neighbors or relatives have "done something" to them. Hatred and anger are then born in people—and that is exactly what the devil wants. When one of these fortune-tellers enters a church, I feel a sharp, stabbing pain in my finger.

How did you manage to serve during the underground period?

— When I was serving in Susoliv in the Sambir region, KGB officers were searching for me throughout the village. At that time, the party secretary hid me in his home. He knew that they would not come to him. He hung a padlock on the door. I watched through the window as they searched for me. Many party members were believers in their hearts.

I was arrested three times. The first time was in 1970 in Krekhiv. I baptized two children and heard the confessions of forty people. I was detained for fifteen days. At night the KGB officer interrogated me; during the day he sent me to hard labor. When he beat me, I said: *"You have a pistol—shoot me. I am not afraid of death."* Recently I learned that that KGB officer died. He was driving a car and crashed into a tree.

I was dismissed from my job. After the arrest I found work as a disinfectant worker at the sanitary-epidemiological station. I continued traveling to hear confessions and baptize. The second time I was arrested was in Lviv in 1985, when I was on my way to hear the confession of a sick person. At that time they confiscated my phelonion, cross, and Gospel book.

The third time, twenty policemen surrounded the house where I was serving. I wanted to escape through a window, but I was caught and taken to Sambir for interrogation. After a search, they released me.

I would never renounce the faith. Death would be better. I knew that martyrs for the faith of Christ bypassed purgatory and entered heaven immediately.

How do you assess the political situation in Ukraine? For whom will you cast your vote in the elections?

— I see nothing good. In the Verkhovna Rada, 231 deputies voted to ban religion in schools. Godless people have come to power. I pray for them every day. I will vote for Viktor Yushchenko. He is a Christian. When he was poisoned, I sent holy oil through Deputy Ihor Yukhnovskyi so that the president might anoint his face. And I prayed that he would recover.

I want Catholics and Orthodox to serve in the same church. Time is needed for this. In my native village, the Orthodox priest would not allow me into the church. I served the Divine Liturgy outdoors. But now the villagers have agreed: they serve in one church. This is how it should be throughout all of Ukraine.

Article III:

On Tuesday, 3 August, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi—an exorcist well known in Western Ukraine—was buried at the Dormition Lavra in the village of Univ, Peremyshliany District, Lviv Region. For forty years he cast out evil spirits and healed the sick. He died on the morning of 31 July, in the eighty-first year of his life, from intestinal cancer.

For three days the body of the hieromonk lay in the Greek Catholic Church of Saint Michael the Archangel in Lviv, where he had served during the final years of his life. He lived in a monastic cell at the monastery attached to the church. Thousands of the faithful came day and night to bid farewell to the priest. The line stretched some 300 meters along Vynnychenko Street.

On Monday, after the parastas, people registered in order to travel to the funeral.

— "We have already ordered ten buses. But we will probably have to order more. You are number 692," says the monk Mykhailo, aged 32.

At 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday, eighteen buses stood near the church. The monk collected 15 hryvnias per person for transportation.

— "The church cannot pay for everything on its own," he explains. "Sit and pray for Voronovskyi. The bus is delayed because we are waiting for a police escort."

We arrive at the Univ church at 10:00 a.m. More than three thousand parishioners have gathered here. They have come from

many regions of western Ukraine. Among the passenger cars are numerous expensive foreign vehicles.

Near the church stand people dressed in black embroidered shirts, holding flowers. Behind them are mothers with infants in strollers. From time to time the crying of children can be heard. The closed coffin with Voronovskyi's body is surrounded by priests. Among them is the deceased's brother, Bishop Yulian, aged 84.

— "The Voronovskyi brothers are people from God. But the elder one (Father Yulian — 'GPU') does not have the same gift as Father Vasyl. I do not even know how it will be without him now. In the past, whether someone's house was on fire or a child was screaming—everyone ran to the priest," sobs Ivanna Hoi, 54, from Univ. "In his youth, Voronovskyi served in this church. People came here from Lviv to confess, to be married, to baptize children. Money never meant anything to him. He always said during services: 'One must live in such a way that after death one may behold God.'"

— "I did not even know that he had cancer," adds her neighbor, Oksana Bozhok, 58. "I heard that last year he climbed Mount Parashka. The wind had knocked down the cross there. When a new one was erected, Father Vasyl undertook to bless it."

Ten-year-old Nadiia from Lviv loses consciousness. Her grandmother, Anastasiia Kohut, 62, pours cold water on her from a plastic bottle.

— "Such heat," she sighs. "Nadiia felt unwell on the way. I did not want to bring her with me, but my daughter insisted. When my granddaughter was just born, she cried constantly and would not eat. We brought her several times to Father Voronovskyi. And it was as if everything was lifted away by hand. To this day we do not know what it was. Father Voronovskyi always cared for sick children. Just look how many of them are here."

A priest reads a letter of condolence from His Beatitude Lubomyr Husar.

"Today is a great feast, for the dream of Hieromonk Vasyl Voronovskyi—to meet God—has been fulfilled," the letter states.

Three cannon shots resound. The coffin is carried to Monks' Hill, where monks are buried.

— "Father Vasyl was like a father to me. And I had to bury him," says Ihor, 57, from the city of Chortkiv in Ternopil Region, setting

aside a shovel. “In my youth I was imprisoned in Lviv. When I was released, I met Voronovskyi. I said: ‘Father, absolve me.’ He instructed me for a long time, advised me how to live further. I returned to God. For many years I traveled to Father to confess.”

Voronovskyi fell ill in 2006. From that time he underwent six operations. In his final days he no longer rose from his bed.

Article IV:

During the missions in the village of Tuchny, Peremyshlyansky district, Lviv region, on August 4-5, 2007, conducted by Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky, several events occurred in which one can see God's power. Undoubtedly, God works in this world through holy people, and our people consider Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky to be just such.

On August 3, 2007, on the first Friday of the month, just before the mission, I, Fr. Andriy, a priest of the parish of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Tuchne, administered the holy mysteries of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick to two sick people in the parish. The next day, the first day of the missions conducted by Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky, after praying for our parish, these two people passed to God. Someone might think that this was a coincidence, but if you look at it through the prism of God's providence, then it becomes clear that when people prayed in church for their parish, God eased the suffering of the two sickest parishioners. One of them, a woman named Galaiko Emilia Antonivna, lived in complete darkness for the last 16 years of her

life, since she lost her sight, and the other, Ivanytska Melania Vasylivna, had her feet festering, causing her severe pain.

After the missions, parishioners shared two testimonies of healing:

Trach Ivanna Mykhailivna, born in 1977, who has a son Ivanko since 2004. At nine months old, the child began to freeze. The mother turned to doctors, but they could not make a diagnosis. In 2006, little Ivan froze, when they called the local paramedic, Mr. Mykola Danylkiv, he asked to take the child to the hospital as soon as possible. On the way, Ivanna Mykhailivna's family prayed to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tuchnyanska, and the child came to his senses and cried. Three days later, the doctors, without making a diagnosis

illness, they sent the mother and child home. When they arrived in the village of Tuchne, Mrs. Ivanna brought the child to the church, prayed for her at the Holy Liturgy, blessed the water, and anointed her with oil during the missions. The child became healthy [1] .

Melnyk Hanna Yaroslavivna testifies that the son of her relative from the village of Vorotkiv near the city of Lutsk suffered from epilepsy. The treatment did not give the proper results. During the missions in the church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 4, 2007, the relative brought the sick child to the

church. After the blessing of water, anointing with oil and the reading of prayers by Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky, the boy recovered [2] .

Article V:

Today, July 31, on the tenth anniversary of the death of one of the most well-known Greek Catholic exorcist priests in Ukraine, the hieromonk Vasyl Voronovskyi of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), we speak with Hieromonk Yustyn Boiko, Synkellos for Monastic Affairs of the Lviv Archeparchy of the UGCC.

Our conversation concerns unique facts from the biography of this UGCC priest during the time of the underground Church, his phenomenon, special missions, the gift of healing, his experience and way of life, as well as his dedication and fidelity to the Church and to the Ukrainian people. It is noteworthy that Father Yustyn personally accompanied Father Voronovskyi in his missionary activity and was a close support and pillar for him during the final period of the elder's life.

> Father, which facts from the life of Father Voronovskyi impressed you the most?

I recall that approximately three years before Father Voronovskyi's death, seeing how his health was weakening, I decided to clarify the most painful chapter of his life. The question concerned his three arrests. In fact, he himself was interested in this. Therefore, we decided to visit all the places where he had been arrested and clarify the details, particularly the reasons for those arrests.

The first place was the hamlet of Fiina in the Zhovkva region. During the underground period, Father Voronovskyi traveled there

to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, baptize children, and crown young couples in marriage. When we arrived in Fiina, the first thing we did was enter the house where he had been arrested. At the moment of the arrest, he was celebrating the Divine Service there and baptizing several children. According to Soviet law, baptizing children and catechizing carried the highest possible penalty. During his arrest, police were present, led by the head of the collective farm. From the hamlet, he was taken to the police station in Zhovkva.

According to his own account, this was the most difficult interrogation of his life, because he was tortured there. He did not understand why he had been arrested or who had betrayed him. First of all, we hurried to determine whether the head of the collective farm was still alive. We were given his address. When we arrived at his yard, we encountered a very elderly man who nevertheless still had a good memory. He recognized Father Voronovskyi. When Father Vasyl asked him whether he had betrayed him, the head of the collective farm replied that it had not been him. He explained that on the day of the arrest, they had received a phone call from the hamlet of Fiina reporting in which house the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated. This call was being monitored, and therefore he was obliged to inform the militia.

He said that when they were traveling to the hamlet, they did not even know whom they would apprehend. Their initial expectation was that a Church hierarch was present there, which is why such severe interrogations were used against Father Voronovskyi. The reason for the phone call that betrayed him was a quarrel between two neighboring women, in which one decided to take revenge on

the other by calling the police. The head of the collective farm had changed his surname; he had undergone training at the insurgent school "Oleni," which was later disbanded, and its chaplain had been our Studite priest, Father Rafail Khomyn.

On the way home from that trip, I remember that Father remained silent for a very long time. Then we prayed the Rosary for all those people. Only afterward did Father say that he bore no resentment toward anyone, but thanked God that he now knew the truth.

> In your opinion, what was his greatest phenomenon?

The greatest phenomenon of Father Voronovskyi, especially when speaking about the UGCC, lay in the fact that he was a true missionary. He possessed a gift from God. Father Vasyl had no fear. He was one of the most active monks and priests of the underground Church. His courage and zeal for the Gospel were so great that very many people admired him.

Seeing this, the late Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk granted him authority to exercise pastoral ministry from Lviv to Vladivostok. When speaking of his significance and phenomenon for the Studite Order, it is important to recall that after the war and during the underground period, the Studites were regarded as a more contemplative monastery. Before the war, we had great and renowned figures—missionaries and scholars—but for some reason, such figures did not appear during the underground years.

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi effectively became the first Studite monk who came to the monastery through the missions of the Redemptorist Fathers, even though he chose to become a Studite.

By his example, Father Voronovskyi showed that the Studite monastery would engage in whatever form of ministry God would send to it by vocation. Thanks to the vocation of Father Voronovskyi, the Studites survived in the underground. Moreover, through his example, Father Sebastiyan Dmytrukh and Bishop Yosyf Milan—now Auxiliary Bishop of Kyiv—entered the monastery.

These monks effectively led the Studites out of the underground and assumed the principal burden of rebuilding and establishing monastic structures from the 1990s onward.

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> Father, you had the opportunity to accompany Father Voronovskyi directly during his missions. Father Vasyl himself was also known for his sense of humor. Could you please recall some amusing incidents from that time?

Yes, although I more readily recall his character through various monastic anecdotes. He was very much loved also because he knew how to smooth over sharp corners in everyday monastic life. At that time, the average age of the Studites was around thirty. Most of us then had little real understanding of monastic life and therefore drew our knowledge mainly from books. Father Vasyl, however, already had a certain amount of experience.

When superiors introduced particularly strict rules, he would come and, in his characteristic manner, say: "Well then, they taught me somewhat differently in the seminary."

For this reason, Father Voronovskyi had an underground nickname among the Studites: "the eternal seminarian," because in all his arguments he referred back to his seminary years.

> Indeed, he used the word "well then" constantly...

Yes, he used "well then" in almost every sentence. He once told me that after his arrest in the hamlet of Fiina, he was interrogated using a very brutal method: they forced a hose into his mouth and poured water through it. In this way, his larynx was damaged. From that time on, he suffered from irritation, and this verbal tic—this habitual phrase "well then"—remained with him.

> Do you recall stories specifically from the missions themselves?

We traveled together on missions very often. I would also like to note that he prepared for every mission in writing. He practically typed out his instructions in notebooks or on cards. What I remember most vividly is one of the last missions we conducted together in the village of Kosmach, in the Turkiv district, at the request of the late Bishop Mykola Simkailo.

At that time, he sent me ahead; together with the sisters, I gave the catechetical instructions, and he arrived toward the end to read the

prayers for healing and the meditations for each station of the Way of the Cross. In this way, we concluded those missions in Kosmach. The cross that is buried there was blessed by Father Vasyl Voronovskyi.

> Everyone was always struck by Father Voronovskyi's trust in God. It was often said that Father Vasyl had a childlike trust. How did this manifest itself in everyday life?

In my conviction, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi had one great gift from God: he had no pride—although at times he liked to boast a little. For example, he would say: "Bishop Mykola Charnetsky was supposed to ordain me. But he did not, because I arrived, and he had already died."

Yet anyone who truly knew him could see that he did this like a child. He was unaware of many things. Perhaps precisely because of this childlike humility and simplicity, God granted him the gift of healing people.

This simplicity was manifested above all in his words and in his manner of speaking. He was accessible to everyone—sometimes even excessively so. This also affected his health. He was sincere, and his simplicity was most clearly reflected in that sincerity.

For example, every Monday, after the prayers at the Church of Saint Michael, people would come to the sacristy and ask that Father pray over them individually. He did not always have the strength to listen to everyone. Father Vasyl always fasted before the prayers. I remember once he said: "Well then, my dear ones, how was I supposed to receive you if I haven't eaten anything at all since early morning?"

I thought to myself that if people had come to me, I would certainly have phrased my response differently. But he simply said, quite plainly, that he was hungry.

> ***What did Father Voronovskyi personally teach you, and what can we learn from him today?***

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi had great zeal for God and for the Church. He loved the God who remains with His people visibly through the Church. I have not encountered another person who loved the Church to such an extent—this holy, catholic, apostolic, and universal Church.

He suffered for unity with the successor of the Apostle Peter; he loved the Church very deeply. Father Vasyl Voronovskyi was also a great patriot. There was hardly any important event at which he was not present. When the Orange Revolution began, he was among the first to go there to pray.

These are the traits that have remained most vividly in my memory, and they are truly worth imitating.

Article VI:

A Pilgrimage — the Road to God

Pilgrimages to holy places were very widespread in our lands and occupied an important place in the spiritual life of the Ukrainian people. Hieromonk Vasyl Voronovskyi shared with us his recollections of pilgrimages:

Father, we are interested in how pilgrimages were conducted in the prewar period.

Almost all Christians tried to go on pilgrimage at least once a year to one of the indulgenced places, where they would обязательно go to confession and receive Holy Communion. Every year, on the feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, my parents traveled to Olesko. Even when my brother was born in May, my mother went on pilgrimage with a two-month-old infant in her arms.

Through the village where we lived, people passed on pilgrimage to Mylatyn. Pilgrims would sleep on the hay in our barn, sometimes as many as fifteen people. In the morning, my father invited them to sit on the wagon, since we were also going to the feast, but the pilgrims refused, wishing to complete the journey on foot.

In the past, people believed that one had to go on pilgrimage only on foot. Why was that?

A pilgrimage is a great sacrifice offered to the Lord. Walking is not easy. By enduring hardships, discomforts, and at times even pain along the way, we in a sense suffer together with Christ, who carried

the Cross to Golgotha. We ask God's forgiveness for our sins and implore His blessing and health. I recall that many people arrived in Univ from Brody and Pidkamin, walking on foot for an entire week, and afterward they also returned home on foot.

Do you remember your first pilgrimage to Univ?

Yes. In 1938 our parish priest organized a pilgrimage to Univ. We children were seated ten at a time on wagons, of which there were about eight. We set out from home in the morning and arrived in Univ in the evening. We attended Vespers, prayed before the miraculous icon, and then went to rest on the hay. The following day everyone went to confession, and during the Divine Liturgy we received Holy Communion. In the afternoon, Abbot Klymentii Sheptytskyi led us through the forest to the village of Slovita. Near the women's monastery there stood an old wooden church, and beside it a lake. I remember that it was there that I rode in a boat for the first time... From that time on, people from our village went on pilgrimage to Univ every year.

What would you wish for those who go on pilgrimages today?

I rejoice that people are once again walking on pilgrimages. Univ is a miraculous place, but there are also other places, even ones unknown to the wider public. For me, there is a miraculous place in the village of Syvorohy (near Univ). Seven years ago, my blood pressure rose very high, and for almost a month my head was spinning severely; no medications helped. One day I was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in Syvorohy and was to distribute Holy Communion. I was very afraid that I might fall. I began to ask the Mother of God to work a miracle. After I received Holy

Communion, my head stopped spinning, and to this very day it has not returned. As long as I live, I will remember this miracle.

Let people go on pilgrimage to holy places, but let them also pray in their own churches, asking God for help. Perhaps the Mother of God worked a miracle for me in Syvorohy in order to draw people's attention to the fact that God hears our prayers everywhere—the essential thing is to have strong faith.

Teachings

HEALING THROUGH PRAYER

A Word to the Reader

You have a beautiful opportunity, through the book you hold in your hands, to join in a prayer of consolation, a prayer of deliverance, a prayer of healing, by which the beloved Servant of the Lord, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi, defends the sick from the snares of evil forces. The Lord God—by a manifestation of His grace—chose this devout priest in a special way to heal not only human souls, but also their bodies. This book is not so much about Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi himself as it is about his experience of healing through prayer. The thoughts and counsels of Fr. Voronovskyi will help you, dear Friend, to avoid sinful passions, to come to know more deeply the power of prayer, and to experience personally its unique gift of healing and conversion.

The Priest Who Casts Out Evil Spirits

Hundreds, thousands of people do not ask how to get to Lviv; they want to know how to find Father Voronovskyi, or one often hears: *"I am going to that priest who casts out the unclean one."*

The priest who casts out evil spirits. Thus—whether out of love or gratitude—Father Vasyl Voronovskyi was named by those Christians who were freed from the snares of evil, sin, and illness. To the Lviv church of Saint Archangel Michael, where Father Vasyl celebrates the Divine Services, people wounded in soul and body come from everywhere. Among the afflicted there is no division between Orthodox and Catholics, Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians. A priest endowed with the Lord's charism gathers under the shelter of his healing prayers all who receive Christ into their hearts and seek help from the Most High.

> **"To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom; to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles..."**
> ***(1 Corinthians 12)***

He is known and honored in his homeland, in towns and villages near and far from Ukraine. For more than forty-five years of priestly ministry, the Studite hieromonk Voronovskyi traveled almost the entire country—from Khust to Kryvyi Rih—not for sightseeing, but to proclaim the Good News and to save human souls.

We sit in the monastery chapel with this childlike humble, openly sincere, yet spiritually steeled and powerful holy man. His open smile, inner purity, and kindness are striking; it is difficult to believe that behind this priest lie decades of wandering, persecution, and oppression by the godless communist regime. He recalls incredible facts of his biography, when for the sake of Christ, under the vigilant eye of the KGB, Father Voronovskyi had to transform

himself at times into a wandering tourist, and at times even into… a beggar.

> "It was in the 1970s, in the village of Susoliv in Sambir district," recalls Father Vasyl. "I was tasked by the Bishop with reopening a church that the Bolsheviks had closed and forbidden to serve in. But the KGB learned of this and surrounded the village with motorcycles and so-called 'bobiks.' Their traps were set so professionally that the slightest mistake would have allowed the godless authorities to throw me into prison. The local villagers proved inventive. They dressed me in a patched sheepskin coat, put a staff in my hands, and assigned a young woman to lead the 'newly made beggar' through the village to the appointed place where I was to celebrate the Divine Liturgy."

The Road to the Church

It began when his mother took little Volodymyr (Father Vasyl's secular name) by the hand and led him to the holy place.

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi was born on May 6, 1929, in the village of Humnyska, Busk district, Lviv region, into the family of a peasant landowner. The Voronovskyi family raised three sons and was deeply devout.

> "When we were still small boys," recalls Father Vasyl, "our mother took me by the hand, and carried my brother Yurii

> **(now Julian—Bishop of the Sambir-Drohobych Eparchy of the UGCC—ed.) in her arms, and together with our parents we always went to church. We traveled by horse to Myljatyn and to the town of Olesko for pilgrimages. In Myljatyn (Busk district), from August 14, 1755, there was a miraculous icon of our Crucified Lord Jesus Christ."**

In 1942 his parents sent the future pastor to study at the Lviv Theological Seminary. When it was closed, he studied at Lviv University in the Faculty of German Philology. Later he worked as a teacher. He was ordained a priest in August 1959. His work as a village schoolteacher was combined with clandestine priestly ministry in the underground Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Father Vasyl celebrated his first Divine Liturgy in a closed church in the village of Kulychkiv, Sokal district, in 1960. Later he secretly served Liturgies in private homes, traveling through villages and cities of Lviv region, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Transcarpathia, Dnipropetrovsk region, Ternopil region, and Kyiv, preaching the teaching of Christ.

On February 12, 1970, at 7:00 p.m., during a Divine Service on the hamlet of Finna of the Krekhiv village council (Lviv region, Zhovkva district), he was arrested by the Bolsheviks and imprisoned.

After his imprisonment, Father Vasyl was no longer permitted to teach. The only institution that employed him—through the assistance of the Greek Catholic priest Yaroslav Tykhyi—was the Lviv Sanitary-Epidemiological Station, where he worked as a disinfectant worker until retirement. Yet he never abandoned

priestly service: every Sunday (his only day off) he celebrated Divine Services in village churches. His second arrest occurred exactly fifteen years after the first—on the same month, day, and hour—this time in Lviv, in the apartment of a sick woman whom he was hearing in confession.

After the UGCC emerged from the underground, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi served in Lviv churches: the Transfiguration of the Lord and Saint Archangel Michael in Sykhiv.

The Gift of Healing

"I first felt this gift from God in 1961. On the Finna hamlet near Krekhiv, a woman asked me to read prayers over her child who awoke at night screaming. The child was helped, and from that time people began to come to me. Clearly, much depends not only on the one who reads the prayers. The person himself must have strong faith in God and rely only on Him," Father Vasyl recounts.

"And once, while I was in prison, a police officer approached me. His son suffered from epilepsy. Together with the sick boy and his mother, I traveled to Dora near Yaremche, to Father-monk Myron. He read the prayers—and the boy was healed. Father Myron saw in me the one who could continue his work."

After Father Myron's death, the secret Bishop of the UGCC, Nykanor Deineha, entrusted me with the ministry of exorcism.

Later this permission was confirmed by Bishop Velychkovskyi and Metropolitan Sterniuk.

A new document of the Apostolic See on the practice of exorcism states: *"The Church has prayed and will continue to pray for the liberation of people from the temptations of the devil."*

Father Voronovskyi recounts from his pastoral experience:

> **"In Komarne, Lviv region, the devil appeared in one house in the form of fire, burning various objects. The owners invited me because the local priest could not help. Before my arrival, the devil wrote on the wall, warning not to call a priest and threatening revenge. I began a holy mission there: for an entire week we prayed with the parishioners. On the eve of the exorcism, six couples who had been living together without marriage came to be wed, fearing that the unclean spirit might come to their homes. Together with the parish priest we blessed the house, the water, and performed the exorcism."**
>
> **"In the village of Yakhtoriv in Zolochiv district, the evil spirit appeared for more than a month, burning a stable and barn, turning off lights in the house. The family slept at neighbors' homes out of fear. When I arrived, I first married the man and woman who lived there with their children. Then all the villagers—Orthodox and Greek Catholics—prayed together."**
>
> **"Once I had to perform an exorcism in Ternopil region, in the village of Kobyvoloky, where the devil set fire to four**

houses. Firefighters could not stop the fire for many days. Only then did they turn to me. To this day everything there is peaceful, and the people do not even wish to recall those horrors."

On the Miraculous Cross

> "I would also like to speak about the cross with which I preach God's word and cast out evil spirits—it is always with me. With this cross I have been in Rome, Lourdes, Paris, Paray-le-Monial, Ars (France), in places of miraculous apparitions; with it I touched miraculous icons and relics of saints. Perhaps it is the cross that acts?" Father Vasyl reflects.

Stories of the miraculous healing of a sixteen-year-old girl who was in intensive care with complications from influenza, and of other bedridden patients who rose to their feet after his prayers, could be told for hours.

> "I never ask for names, and I never take money. I always say: thank God, not me."

At the solemn Liturgy marking his 70th birthday and 40th anniversary of priestly ordination, many grateful people gathered. He celebrated in a new phelonion embroidered and gifted by a young woman whom he had nearly brought back from death.

Returning to the Family Nest

Today Father Vasyl serves in Lviv, in the monastic church of the Studite Fathers of Saint Archangel Michael. He often visits his native village of Humnyska. In the village church, faithful of the UOC-KP and the UGCC pray alternately. But when Father Voronovskyi arrives for the blessing of water, services, or exorcism, all Christians gather together, regardless of confession.

The people of Humnyska love and honor their fellow villager. They helped the brothers—Father Vasyl and Bishop Julian of the Sambir-Drohobych Eparchy—build the Chapel of the Transfiguration of the Lord, a bell tower, and a water-blessing shrine on the site where their parental home once stood, where devout parents raised three sons for Ukraine: servants of God in the priesthood and episcopacy, and a schoolteacher.

Clergy Speak About the Priest

A story about the venerable charismatic Father Vasyl Voronovskyi and his healing prayers would be incomplete without giving voice to others.

Fr. Roman Kaspryshyn (Rudno, Lviv region):
— I have known Father Vasyl since the days of the UGCC underground. Like many of my brothers, he bore the full burden of horrors endured by our long-suffering martyr Church. Only his extraordinary piety and sincerity of prayer enabled him to survive persecution and moral terror. His journeys of hundreds of

kilometers to hear a single confession truly merit God's abundant grace.

Fr. Mykola Holovetskyi (Krukenychi, Lviv region):
— I had long heard of Father Vasyl and his gift of healing the afflicted. I met him personally nine years ago during the Divine Liturgy. Through his prayerful posture he draws upon himself extraordinary divine grace, and like Bishop Mykola Charnetskyi, whose disciple he is, he possesses a remarkable gift of healing. I witnessed this among my parishioners.

Fr. Bohdan Vovk (Church of St. George, Mostyska):
— For a long time I have assisted Father Vasyl by preparing people through Confession to receive God's grace. I testify to the miraculous power of his prayer. Once, during the reading of exorcism prayers, a young man fell to his knees and began barking like a dog—evidence that the demon was driven out.

Fr. Ivan Chycherskyi (Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Lviv):
— I have known Father Vasyl for more than thirteen years. His greatness lies in holy simplicity and living faith. This enables him to ignite faith, hope, and love in people, and to heal both souls and bodies from the manifestations of evil.

About Psychics, Magic, and the End of the World

(Questions and Answers Between Good and Evil)

Our conversation with the charismatic priest Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi is, so to speak, the "culmination" of the book we offer to you, devout Reader.

— Reverend Father, in recent times many people have appeared who heal by so-called biofields and convince us that they can foretell the future. From whom is this? Is it truly—from the unclean one? What is your opinion on this, and that of the Church in particular?

— My views fully coincide with the teaching of the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles there is mention of the sorcerer Simon, who "amazed the people of Samaria and claimed to be someone great"; of a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus; of a servant girl possessed by a spirit of divination, whom the Apostle Paul cast out. The *Kyivan Caves Paterikon* writes of Nikita, who had the gift of prophecy and an extraordinary memory—he knew the entire Old Testament. But when the demon was cast out of him, he forgot everything.

People who go to be "healed" by "energy workers" or "healers" do not understand the essence of that treatment. Psychics, by barbaric methods, redistribute energy, as a result of which the diseased organ receives it and another grows weak.

During a "session," "healers" can "pump out" energy from a patient, establish a long-term energetic bond with him; they can even live off his energy. "Healers" often drive people into psychological disorders and ruin their souls. It would be better for a person to go to Confession, to the Divine Service, to pray and ask the Lord for help—and even to die in God's grace. For the Lord sends illnesses

because of our sins, so that we may understand: life is a short instant, after which comes Eternity. Illness is given to test our humility.

During sickness one should turn to doctors and entrust them with one's body, but not one's soul. The soul—apart from God—let us entrust to no one. Therefore, a Christian who "is treated" by a psychic or wants to know his future betrays Christ, betrays his faith, and enters into contact with an unclean power.

— Yet most such "healers" say that they heal precisely by prayer, and they even direct their patients to church, to Confession. They inspire trust in people.

— These are representatives of "white" magic, for we have just spoken of their opposite—those who practice "black" magic. Such psychics go to church and "heal," allegedly by God's power, but often they themselves do not suspect that they have come under the dominion of demonic powers.

— And what, in your view, is hypnosis?

— Some people who have strong energy can influence others and hypnotize them. But no one has the right to interfere in someone else's consciousness. One must not submit to hypnosis knowingly; it is a sin.

— And can one know one's future in advance?

— This already belongs to the sphere of astrology. Today there are very many horoscopes: notions that a person's fate depends on the movement of planets, on the arrangement of stars... Planets

influence ocean and sea currents, the direction of winds—but in no case do they influence a person's fate. God created the human person and gave him reason and free will, and these are what he must use. Therefore, the Church categorically forbids fortune-telling and the prediction of the future—even under threat of death.

— Yet many people are swayed by the fact that seers speak the truth. Sociological studies claim that their predictions come true in seventy cases out of a hundred.

— This is explained by the fact that formerly the unclean spirit was in the angelic hierarchy and in one way or another was initiated into the mysteries of being. He preserved that knowledge and now tries to subjugate the human person by revealing to him certain secrets...

— ...or he appears before him in the form of visitors from outer space...

— In the Bible there is not a single hint of the existence of other civilizations. If, before the twentieth century, a humanoid—often radiant—being appeared to a Christian, of gigantic or dwarf stature, with burning or red eyes, and its appearance inspired fear, the believer had no doubt who it was. By the sign of the Cross and by prayer he drove the demon away. But now, if such a monster appears before an atheist or a weak believer (and such are the majority), he takes it for an alien and often willingly enters into contact with it.

— In a room there is some incomprehensible knocking, strange voices; things begin to fly in the air; without any cause flames break out... What is this?

— It is the devil—or poltergeist, as science says: a spirit that harms people. There are about twenty scientific theories that attempt to explain this phenomenon. But through many centuries it has been proven that all occult actions cease when confronted with God's power. For this, above all, strong faith in the Lord and in God's word is needed. In special cases the Church uses specific prayers. The priest adjures the devil (for this he must have permission from Church authority). I remind you again: I have such permission from the Bishop and the Patriarch.

— And are you not afraid?

— When I went to read the prayers of adjuration in Komarne, I took the Holy Mysteries upon my chest. When I am with Jesus Christ—I fear nothing. But that day the devil wanted to harm me. When I approached the courtyard of the church of Archangel Michael and went to the car, the automobile glass suddenly shattered into little pieces. Moreover, the alarm turned on and did not fall silent until we arrived at St. George's Cathedral.

— And what means of protection from the unclean force do laypeople have? With what can a Christian defend himself first of all?

— From experience, over forty-six years of priesthood, I see that people are taken over by an evil spirit through a bad Confession. Sometimes, at marriage, they are ashamed to say that they lived

marital life before the wedding; in other cases they conceal the sin of relations with animals, debauchery, abortions. And through such Confession people are taken over by an evil spirit. Therefore I say: confess well; do not hide sins. All those confessions in which you did not admit your faults are sacrilege. And the devil takes such a person ever more strongly: fear appears, then an aversion to going to church, to Confession.

The best defense against the devil is frequent Holy Confession and Holy Communion; wearing a blessed cross on oneself, a medal, a rosary. And holy water drives away an evil spirit. One may drink it, and rub the body with it in illness—and for many people this helps.

I also advise those who need healing to ask the intercession of my teacher, Blessed Bishop Mykola Charnetskyi. His relics are in the Lviv church of the holy hieromartyr Josaphat. Through the intercession of this holy wonderworker, tens and hundreds of people find peace of soul, strengthen their faith, and are healed.

— Father, may we regard all the negativity of our time as the beginning of the end, a sign or preparation for the coming of the Antichrist?

— When the Antichrist will come is unknown. The Gospel does not state it precisely, and you will not find an exact date in Holy Scripture. Likewise, the exact time of the end of the world is unknown. It is sectarians who like to speak about the last times. How many dates for the end of the world have already been "set": 1848, July 1977, and finally the autumn of 1999. But how can they know this, when Christ says in the Gospel that no one knows about the end of the world—not even the angels—only the Heavenly

Father? Sectarians only deceive people in order to draw them into their organization.

The Mother of God of Fatima, at the time of her apparition, said: "If Ukraine and Russia convert to God, there will be no Third World War; and if they do not convert, then know that there will be a Third World War." And in that war only one third of humanity may survive. That would already resemble the end of the world: we would have a terrible catastrophe. Therefore we must believe the Mother of God and pray for the conversion of Ukraine and Russia. Now, when all sorts of sects appear like mushrooms after rain and preach teachings far from Christian, for this, I believe, we will be punished by the Lord. And if those sects continue to spread, the Antichrist may come—and they will accept him.

— Is it a sin to tell fortunes with cards?

— It is from the devil.

After the conversation with Father Vasyl Voronovskyi, one's soul becomes calm. His constant "my dear ones" wraps one in warmth and awakens in each of us a sense of gratitude to the Most High for the possibility—through the prayer of His beloved shepherd—of drawing near to the Kingdom of Heaven. For one truly believes that this righteous man can heal by the word of the Lord not only souls, but also bodily illnesses.

PRAYER TO THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS

(Against evil spirits)

Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face. As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish; as wax melts before the face of fire, so let demons perish before those who love God and sign themselves with the sign of the Cross, and who say with joy: Rejoice, most precious and life-giving Cross of the Lord! You drive away demons by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified upon you, who descended into Hades and crushed the power of the devil, and who gave you to us, precious Cross, for the driving away of every adversary. O most precious and life-giving Cross of the Lord, help me, together with the Mother of God and all the Saints, forever. Amen.

PRAYER OVER ONE WHO IS SICK AND SUFFERS FROM SLEEPLESSNESS IN ILLNESS

O great and all-glorious God, incomprehensible and unconquerable! You created the human person with Your hand from the dust of the earth and endowed him with Your image and likeness. Jesus Christ, let Your majestic and wondrous Name appear, together with Your eternal Most Holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, and come to Your servant (Name), and visit his (her) soul and body.

In this intention our most glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, beseeches You together with the holy heavenly and bodiless Powers; with the honorable and glorious Prophet and Forerunner and Baptist John; with the holy, glorious, and all-praised Apostles; and with our holy universal Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Athanasius and Cyril, Nicholas of Myra, and Spyridon the Wonderworker, and all the holy Hierarchs; the first martyr and archdeacon Stephen; the holy and glorious great martyrs: George the Victorious, Demetrius the Myrrh-streaming, Theodore Stratelates, and all the holy martyrs; our venerable and God-bearing Fathers: Anthony and Theodosius, Euthymius, Sabbas the Sanctified, Onuphrius, Arsenius, and all the venerable Fathers and Mothers; the holy physicians and healers, the unmercenary ones: Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon and Hermolaus, Samson and Diomedes, Thalaleus and Tryphon, and Your other righteous ones; and the holy (name of the saint to whom this church is dedicated, in which you are praying); and all the Saints.

Grant, O Lord, to Your servant (Name) a sleep of consolation, bodily sleep, health, salvation, and life; strength of soul and body.

Come Yourself, O King and Lover of mankind, even now, and by the descent of Your Holy Spirit visit Your servant (Name) and grant him (her) health, vigor, and joy of soul, for the sake of Your mercy; for from You come all good gifts and every perfect gift.

For You are the Physician of our souls and bodies, and to You we send up glory, thanksgiving, and worship, together with Your

eternal Father and Your Most Holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

O Master Almighty, Holy King, who chastises but does not slay, who strengthens the fallen and raises up those cast down, who sets right the bodily afflictions of people: we pray to You, our God—visit with Your mercy Your servant (or Your handmaid, or Your servants), (Name), who is sick (or who are sick); forgive him (her, them) every transgression, voluntary and involuntary.

Yes, O Lord: send down from Heaven Your healing power; touch the body; extinguish the fever; calm the suffering and every hidden infirmity. Be the physician of Your servant (Name); raise him (her, them) from the bed of sickness and the bed of weakness, whole and healthy (her whole and healthy; them whole and healthy). Grant him (her, them) to be pleasing to Your Church (pleasing) and a doer (a doer) of Your will.

For it belongs to You to have mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we send up glory—to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit—now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER FOR EVERY INFIRMITY

O Master Almighty, Physician of souls and bodies, who humbles and raises up, chastises and heals again: visit with Your mercy our

brother (our sister), (Name), who is sick; stretch forth Your hand, full of healing and remedy, and heal him (her), raising him (her) from the bed and from weakness.

Forbid the spirit of infirmity; drive away from him (her) every pain, every wound, every fever, and trembling; and if there is in him (her) any sin or lawlessness, weaken it, remit it, forgive it—for the sake of Your love for mankind.

Yes, O Lord, have mercy upon Your creature in Christ Jesus, our Lord, with whom You are blessed, together with Your Most Holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE AILING

O Lord our God, Jesus Christ! When You were still living on earth, people brought the sick to You, and often they themselves came to You in whole crowds, and You made the weak stand on their feet, cleansed lepers, restored sight to the blind, speech to the mute, and hearing to the deaf, and granted to all who were gravely ill the health of soul and body.

Look, O Lord, in Your mercy upon me, Your sick servant (handmaid), (Name), and if it is Your holy will, restore to me (to him, to her) health.

But if bodily health could be a danger to the salvation of my (his, her) soul, and if this illness is a path that will lead me (him, her) to You, then by Your grace help me (him, her), in submission to Your holy will, to endure the illness patiently, without complaint or murmuring. Let this patience be for me (for him, for her) for the remission and atonement of all my (his, her) faults and for the gathering of merits for eternal life.

And by my (his, her) life, and by my (his, her) death, may the Name of the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit—be glorified unto ages of ages. Amen.

IN ILLNESS

O most merciful Lord God, my refuge and consolation of the suffering: look upon me, unworthy (female: unworthy), receive my prayer which I offer to You in this heavy sorrow, and deliver me from this illness which You have sent upon me. I beg Your grace: console me, restore my strength, and heal me!

Have mercy on me, a sinner (female: a sinner), unworthy of Your mercy. I believe and trust that You, O Lord, will hear me, as You hear all who turn to You with a humble heart.

If, O Lord, You have sent this sickness upon me for my faults and sins, and by this illness You wish to chastise me, then I ask You, my Savior, forgive me, truly repentant (female: truly repentant), as You forgave the paralytic; and I will not forget Your reminder: "Behold, you are made well; sin no more, lest something worse befall you!"

My health is in Your hands; allow me, O Lord, to regain it and to live yet some time for Your glory, for the good of my neighbors, and for the acquiring of merits for eternity. But if, O Lord, in Your wisdom You have decreed otherwise, let it be as You will. Guide, O Lord, my fate in life and after death. You know, O Lord, what leads me to good. Do not abandon me in my illness and in the hour of death.

Strengthen me with faith, firm hope, and Your mercy; warm my heart with sincere love for You, and save me. And that all this may be, once again I cry: let Your holy will be done! Amen.

IN SORROWS AND MISFORTUNES

O merciful God! You see what misfortune has met me. It is grievous and bitter for me. Yet when I remind myself how terribly they scourged You, my Savior, how they crowned Your holy head with thorns, and how grievously You suffered when they crucified You upon the Cross, then I see that mine is not comparable to Yours...

You accepted all Your pains and sufferings voluntarily and endured them in order to atone for my sins and the sins of the whole world... So I too gladly accept my sorrow and will not complain, so that I may at least in part atone for my sins and the sins of my loved ones. Jesus, my God, help me to endure all this patiently! Amen.

PRAYERS OVER THE SICK AND FOR OTHER NEEDS

FIRST PRAYER

(It is desirable that the first three (3) prayers be read by a priest)

O Master, Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior,
You alone have authority to forgive sins, as the good and Lover of mankind God. Disregard all the conscious and unconscious transgressions of Your servant (or Your handmaid), (Name), and grant him (her) to receive without condemnation Your most pure Mysteries—not unto punishment, nor unto the increase of sins, but unto the cleansing of soul and body and as a pledge of Your Kingdom.

For You are help, a firm wall, and a defense against the adversary, and the purification of his (her) transgressions. For You are a merciful and Lover of mankind God, and to You we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

SECOND PRAYER

O Lord, I know that I am unworthy (female: unworthy) that You should enter under my roof, into the house of my soul, for it is wholly empty and sinful, and You have no worthy place in me where You might lay Your head. But because You desire to dwell with me, placing my hope in Your mercy, I come to You.
Command that the doors of my unworthy lips be opened, that I may be satisfied (female: may be satisfied) by You alone; enter into me and cleanse me from every defilement, bodily and spiritual. Be my helper and protector, and grant that I may stand at Your right hand, through the prayers and supplications of our most pure Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all the saints who from ages past have been pleasing to You.
For You are blessed unto the ages. Amen.

THIRD PRAYER

May the most merciful Lord God bestow His bounty upon you.
May the Lord Jesus Christ grant you the fulfillment of every good petition.
May the Almighty Lord deliver you from every trial.
May the Lord teach you.

May the Lord instruct you.
May the Lord help you.
May the Lord save you.
May the Lord protect you.
May the Lord guard you.
May the Lord cleanse you.
May the Lord fill you with spiritual joy.
May the Lord be the defender of your soul and body.
May the Lord, as a merciful and good Lover of mankind, grant you the forgiveness of sins.
May the Lord God Jesus Christ, on the day of judgment, have mercy on you and bless you all the days of your life.

For to Him belong all glory, honor, and worship, together with His Father without beginning, and His most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Interview (2003)

Fr. Vasyl, Introduction (rough translation):

It seems strange to me that a person can still say that God does not exist. Listen—this entire world, the whole universe, proclaims that God exists. What can one possibly say instead? That the world made itself? Well, wait—that is a fairy tale. That man came from a monkey? And where did the monkey come from?

It seems rather strange to me that a person can persuade himself that there is no God, especially today, when there are so many miracles. If one were to gather them all—just consider how many people come to me and give thanks.

And when God calls me, I believe that all those people who were converted will reach heaven. I will rejoice, and I will rejoice in them—that they listened to me, that they converted, and that they believed in God.

Autobiography:

In 1938, in my village of Humnytsia, in the Busk district, Redemptorist priests came to conduct a mission. They gave teachings for two weeks—this is what a mission is: catechetical instruction. They preached in the morning and in the evening, almost an hour each time. I attended those teachings, listened attentively, and decided to consecrate myself to God and to become

a missionary, to give missions myself. I made this decision in my ninth year of life.

I had already resolved to dedicate myself to God, and after I finished the seventh grade in Busk, my parents arranged for me to be prepared privately. Teachers prepared me—one of them was a teacher named Kalynovych. He prepared me in Greek and Latin, as well as in the Ukrainian language and history, so that I could pass the examinations for the first, second, and third years of the gymnasium. I passed all the exams successfully.

I was then admitted to the theological seminary, where I studied from 1942 to 1945. In 1945, the seminary was liquidated. The priests were arrested and dispersed, and the theological seminary was closed. I then completed secondary school and went on to finish university. Even after finishing university, my only dream was still to become a priest.

I prepared for the priesthood secretly. I was taught by Bishop Mykola Charnetskyi—the same Bishop Charnetskyi whom the Pope later proclaimed Blessed. After Bishop Charnetskyi died, I continued my formation under Bishop Nikanor Deyneha, who was also a clandestine bishop. I completed moral theology and dogmatics and passed everything required.

In 1959, I effectively began working as a priest. I served in various villages and towns; everything was underground. This continued until about 1978. These were Leninist times, and they made even Easter a working day.

Once, I went to the Sambir district, to the village of Khlopchytsi, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. There were around two thousand people there. The entire churchyard and the whole church were packed with people. I made the procession with the burial shroud, blessed Easter baskets, and confessed people.

The authorities were present, but the people did not tell me. I think it was done intentionally—people had brought cars and positioned them so that their headlights illuminated the church. It was night. The people did not tell me anything, and had they told me, I would have been afraid. They said nothing. I served the Divine Liturgy, blessed the baskets, and then went toward the train. The entire church accompanied me to the train station.

I thought it must be a working day and that everyone was going to work, but they were not going to work—they were escorting me, because they knew the militia might already be waiting for me at the station. Only a week later did I learn that the militia had indeed been watching me and had gone to the station, but when they saw the sheer number of people, they left and could not arrest me.

The first time I was imprisoned was on February 12, 1970, at seven o'clock in the evening. I will remember that day forever—it was the Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs. I had been asked to go baptize a child. When I arrived at the house, I baptized two children. There were about forty people present, and I heard confessions. I was also celebrating the Divine Liturgy.

The doors were not closed because the house was completely full of people, even the entryway was packed. More than forty people were present. Because of that, the doors were left open. The militia arrived, along with the KGB, the head of the collective farm, and the chairman of the village council—everyone came.

I communed everyone. I was interrogated especially about children. I knew very well that baptizing or confessing children meant prison. Another priest had already been sentenced to three years in prison for baptizing children, so I knew what awaited me.

I did not admit anything. When I hear confessions, I cover my face; I do not look to see whether the person is a child or not. I confess everyone. If I had admitted it, they would have given me fifteen days immediately. I was also fired from my job—I had been teaching German and English.

You know, we prayed. And you see, I never cursed the KGB, nor Stalin, nor anyone—nothing like that. This is what God allowed. Christ Himself bore the Cross; He Himself went through suffering. In the same way, God allowed such a cross to be placed upon us.

And you see, one must not curse those officials. There were even cases when I was summoned to the head of the KGB in order to hear his mother's confession. I went, thinking that I was going to be questioned. Instead, I heard his mother's confession and administered anointing to her.

It was like that—there were even four prosecutors to whom I administered the Sacraments. Later one of them said to me: "If we were to catch you, according to our laws, I would have to give you five to eight years.(?)"

Even while in prison, I preached the Word of God and traveled through villages. However, at that time I was not yet permitted to read the prayers of exorcism.

Only later—around 1970—there was among us a priest, Fr. Myron, a Studite monk of our rite. He had permission to read those prayers. When I was imprisoned in 1970, after they arrested me, the son of a militiaman was afflicted with what was called the "black illness."

After I was released from prison, I took that militiaman's son to Fr. Myron in Yaremche. We arrived there in the evening, and he said: "All of you will fast; I will not give you supper. You must pray, so that I may be able to read the prayers and that this child may be healed."

We did not eat—neither the boy, nor his mother, nor I. In the morning he read the prayers. We rose, he read the prayers, and the child became well.

After that, when Fr. Myron died, he appointed me to read the prayers in his place and said to me: "Drive away from them every evil power."

You know, there are already very many people. So many people come, and I also love reading these prayers. But truly, there are already so many—people come every day, and they also ask me to

bless their homes. I cannot agree to everything. One house may be blessed, prayers read—but two or three houses in one day? One must understand that when it is a matter of casting out an evil spirit, the blessing of a house takes time. To bless a house properly can take nearly an hour, and the prayers themselves can take close to two hours.

So I serve here, I read the prayers until around nine o'clock, sometimes until one in the morning, and then I still go to bless a house—four o'clock, five o'clock—and only then do I eat breakfast. Even now, only after surgery, because I have already had my appendix removed, my spleen ruptured and was also removed, and later I had stomach surgery, my gallbladder was removed as well. I even went to the Bishop, who allowed me to eat, gave me permission—but I am afraid to eat, because Christ Himself says: "This kind is driven out by prayer and fasting."

I once had such a case. There was a girl—it was during Great Lent, on a Friday—and she went dancing. She then saw the devil. This happened on Stryiska Street. She saw the devil, became mute, and they brought her to me. I had eaten supper around nine-thirty in the evening, and she arrived crying, saying that the child was dying. She was seventeen years old.

I took the Holy Mysteries, all the books, everything, and went there. I began reading the prayers and blessing the house. Then the girl began to speak. I heard her confession and did everything that was needed. Around one o'clock in the morning, I returned here to the monastery and lay down to sleep.

In the morning, I came to serve the Divine Liturgy—and I could not speak. I was mute. The Word of God was before me, everything was in my memory, but there was no sound. I stepped aside during the Liturgy and stood to the side. From that time on, I have been afraid. I am afraid that if I eat and then go to read the prayers, this may happen again.

Yet you know, I feel that I am happy—truly content—that I can help people. You know how much can be said about the underground years, how many children I baptized. And sometimes I am very tired, exhausted—but my dear ones, I am content.

I do not collect testimonies. Someone might say that I am boasting—I do not want that praise. I do not want glory. People come and thank me, but I tell them: thank God. It is God's power—God heals, not I. I only beseech God.

I do not want that glory, you know. If I were to boast, God could take this away from me, and I would read the prayers and no one would be helped.

[Speaking inside a chapel built over his childhood home in his village]:
So I gathered myself together, because you know—in the underground period I celebrated the Divine Liturgy here. My own brother, my uncle as well—Fr. Yosyp Varnovskyi—celebrated the Divine Liturgy in this house. At the same time, another brother, who had also been secretly ordained a priest and later secretly consecrated a bishop, served as well. Three priests were born in this house.

At first, you see, I took a plan for a small chapel. But later the people themselves expanded this chapel. In 1996, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk consecrated it to the Transfiguration of the Lord, on August 19. On that day, he also granted an indulgence.

At the consecration of the chapel, there were about twenty-three priests present. And now, every year, there are at least twelve—at least twelve to fifteen priests—who come here annually for this feast and pilgrimage.

My mother came from a village on my grandmother's side, in the Zolochiv district. She attended a gymnasium and knew the German and Latin languages, and even a little Greek. In those days, the gymnasiums provided a strong education. When we were little, my dear ones, on certain days we had to speak German—our mother spoke to us in German, and we were required to answer in German. She instilled in us a love for foreign languages.

My father finished the local school here in Humnytsia(?). He was more involved in farming. My father taught me how to mow, my dear ones, how to plow, how to sow—well, I did not sow, but I knew how to plow and mow, because we had a great deal of land. So, my dear ones, it was necessary to help our parents. When I came home on vacation from the theological seminary, I helped my parents.

[Speaking to monks and interviewer about Our Lady Zarvanytsia]

The Zarvanytsia Icon was hidden here [Monastery]. I even buried one monk here—Monk Arsenii. I conducted the funeral service at night. I served the Divine Liturgy, performed the final kiss, and we

went outside. I was reading the Gospel when the militia arrived. There were many people present—one could say several hundred, perhaps up to five hundred people. At that moment, I bent down, and the people parted for me. I passed from one courtyard to another and escaped. After that, the people themselves completed the burial. I could only watch from a distance as they carried the body of that priest for burial.

Later that evening, I returned and sealed the grave. Those were difficult times—terrifying times.

Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky

As Compiled by the Good People of Busk, Lviv

He was born in the village of Yablunivka, Busk District, Lviv Region.
Father Vasyl is a hieromonk of the Studite Rule, a disciple of Blessed Mykola Charnetskyi, and one of the most well-known exorcist priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine. He is a man of great spiritual strength. Through the prayer and witness of this self-sacrificing priest, thousands of the faithful—both during the years of the Church's underground existence and after its revival—have set out upon the path of conversion and salvation.

Deeply believing people, in the most difficult moments of life, place their trust in God

Each year in Ukraine, the number of psychics and so-called healers increases, claiming that they can cure any illness. What would you say about such healers?

— If people knew by what means those "healers" treat others, and what consequences arise from it, they would never turn to them for help. A Christian who goes to such people "for healing" enters into contact with unclean forces and in this way betrays Jesus Christ and his faith in Him. First, they go to the servants of the devil seeking help, and only afterward—when it does not help (and it will not help)—do they turn to a priest, begging the Lord for deliverance. Then one must long beg God for forgiveness, and even for healing, if such be His holy will. After such sessions, people even purchase photographs of these healers, not realizing that together with them they bring an evil spirit into their home.
There was such a case. Once I was invited to expel an unclean spirit from a factory where televisions were being manufactured. Something was going wrong there until I purified the premises. This happened because the management had not allowed one psychic to hold a meeting with the workers in order to recruit them. In retaliation, he took revenge in this manner. So just imagine with whom one may be dealing.

What should Christians do so that fortune-tellers and sorcerers do not harm them?

— I have said many times that the best protection for believers against the servants of the devil is life in God's grace—that is, observance of God's commandments, frequent reception of the Holy Mysteries, and the practice of fasting and prayer. And let people fear nothing, for without God's permission not even a hair will fall from their head. Jesus forgave those who tortured and crucified Him and prayed for them, saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In the same way, we too must forgive everyone, and God will reward us for this, while those who have done evil to us will be punished. God is a just Judge: He rewards good and punishes evil.

How does an evil spirit take possession of a person? Can it enter someone while prayers of exorcism are being read in church?

— To the second question I answer "no"—it cannot enter, because people are praying and renouncing the evil spirit. But in everyday life—it can. Therefore, a person must live according to God's laws and pray in order to rid oneself of the devil's influence. He can even appear in the form of an angel of light. In such a case, ask: "Who are you?"—but he will never give a direct answer. Then one should say: "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord." And under no circumstances, even while bathing, should one remove a baptismal cross or medal, for it protects a person from the devil.

How can one recognize a person possessed by an unclean spirit?

— Usually such a person does not reveal it, because when an evil spirit takes possession of the body, the person remembers nothing. Sometimes the person is thrown to the ground and is unaware of what is happening. I recall how in Yaremche, during the reading of an exorcism prayer, one woman struck the cross I was holding with such force that it flew about two meters away. The woman was healed, but she does not remember what happened.

What might hallucinations indicate?

— There are different kinds—auditory and visual—but I believe that neither one nor the other is good. Therefore, one must pray and ask God for help and healing. I knew one young woman who cut her veins and ended up in a psychiatric hospital. Before that, she and five friends had sinned during Great Lent. Both she and her companions experienced hallucinations.

What should one do when evil thoughts arise?

— First of all, pray. Also, obtain the book The Way of the Cross, read it, and then meditate on each station, on the sufferings of Christ, who took our sins upon Himself. Remember this.

Is it permissible to pray before an unblessed icon or an image taken from a magazine?

— An image from a magazine, like any icon, can (and even should) be blessed. It should be placed in a frame and hung on the wall. An-icon is something that raises our mind to God. Therefore, one must pray to the Lord, not to the icon—and this is the essential point.

What should one do when deceased relatives frequently appear in dreams and even speak?

— Offer intentions for the Divine Liturgy, for they evidently are in need of prayer. One should take upon oneself acts of penance for the liberation of their souls from purgatory. Pay attention to the dream itself, for it may be quite realistic. In such cases, prayer—and once again prayer—will be of help.

How long after confession may one approach Holy Communion? Is it permissible for a child or a sick person to eat or drink something before the Divine Liturgy and confession?

— Approximately three weeks, [how long a confession remains "valid" for the reception of the Eucharist, assuming no grave sin has intervened] provided one has not sinned. As for food before confession, a child or a person weakened by illness is permitted to drink tea and eat a piece of bread. I understand that not everyone—especially children—can fast for a long time. The

primary focus, however, should be placed on spiritual fasting. In addition, one should refrain from smoking for at least one hour before confession.

Today, even in our town of Busk, various sects have intensified their activity. What is your opinion on this?

— Sects are created by people under the influence of the evil spirit. This is not God's work, because sects divide the Church, whereas Jesus explicitly said that there must be one flock (cf. John 10:16). The very term "sect" comes from the Latin word sectare, which in translation means "to cut into pieces a single body." In the same way, every sect tears away some portion of the faithful from the Church of Christ, proclaiming itself the only true Church and even asserting that only its members will attain salvation. Sectarians mislead people with their false teachings, deny the Church's authentic doctrine concerning the Holy Mysteries, the Most Holy Mother of God, and the veneration of icons. Instead of responding "Glory to Jesus Christ," they say "Good day," and they accuse Christians of crucifying Christ whenever they make the sign of the cross. One who joins a sect, in essence, seeks salvation apart from the Savior, and truth apart from the one true Teacher.

In conclusion, I would like to say: may God grant that all who listened to (in the recording) and read these exhortative words be strengthened in the true faith in the Triune God, and that those who have gone astray and found a deceptive refuge in various sects may return to the bosom of the Holy Church. For deeply believing people, even in the most difficult moments of their lives, place their trust in God. - Iryna Haievska

“Volia Narodu” (The Will of the People)
2 April 2009, No. 14 (1927)

“To one is given the word of wisdom; ... to another—the power to work miracles...”

Over the past weekend, extraordinary events took place in the Church of St. Nicholas in Busk, for the Divine Service and the Holy Liturgy were celebrated by our compatriot, the hieromonk of the Studite Rule, Vasyl Voronovskyi—a man of great spiritual strength, through whose prayers thousands of the faithful, both during the years of the Church’s underground existence and after its revival, have set foot upon the path of salvation. Moreover, on Saturday and Sunday, Father Vasyl also reads prayers of exorcism and healing in the church.

Against Evil—by Prayer and Fasting

What is exorcism? It consists of prayers for the expulsion of an evil spirit, approved by ecclesiastical authority. Only those priests who have received permission from a bishop may recite them. Otherwise, anyone who attempts to expel evil spirits exposes himself to grave danger. This is described in the Acts of the Apostles, when the sons of a Jewish high priest, without authorization, attempted to adjure the devil “by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims,” and “the evil spirit answered them, saying, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leapt upon them, overpowered them all, and so prevailed against them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded” (cf. Acts 19:15–16).

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi received permission to read exorcisms in 1972. From that time onward, he came to be known as a priest who expels evil spirits—whether out of love or gratitude, Christians who had been freed from the snares of evil, sin, and illness called him so. To the Lviv Church of the Holy Archangel Michael, where Father Vasyl celebrates the services, people afflicted in soul and body come from everywhere, and among the sick there is no division between Orthodox and Catholics, Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians. A priest endowed with a divine charism gathers under the protection of his healing prayers all who seek help from the Most High. "To one is given the word of wisdom; to another faith in the same Spirit; to another the power to work miracles..." (1 Corinthians 12).

The Gift of Healing

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi recounts that he first sensed God's gift of healing in 1961. At the Finna hamlet near Krekhiv in the Lviv region, a woman asked him to read prayers over a child who would awaken at night and scream. The sick child was helped, and from that time onward people began to turn to the priest. He maintains, however, that much depends not only on the one who reads the prayers. The person himself must have strong faith in God and place hope in Him alone.

Father Vasyl can cite many examples of successful exorcisms. During prayers for the expulsion of evil spirits (according to the testimony of many people), it even happened that various inhuman screams, roaring, and sounds resembling barking or crowing were heard. "Yet these people, possessed by an evil spirit, remember nothing,"

Father Vasyl says, “but after the exorcism they calm down and receive healing.”
Without a doubt, unclean spirits fear the power of Father Vasyl’s prayer, as he comes in God’s name to the sick and afflicted, fearlessly expelling the devil and healing various human ailments.

The Road to the Church

It began when his mother would take little Vasyl by the hand and lead him to the holy place.
Father Vasyl Voronovskyi was born on 6 May 1929 in the village of Humnysko, into the family of a farming household. The Voronovskyi family raised three sons and was deeply devout. “When we were still small boys,” Father Vasyl recalls, “our mother took me by the hand, and carried my brother Yurii (later Julian—Bishop of the Sambir–Drohobych Eparchy of the UGCC—ed.) in her arms, and thus we always went to church with our parents. We traveled by horse to pilgrimages in Myliatyn and Olesko. In Myliatyn, from 14 August 1755, there was a miraculous icon of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified.”
In 1942, his parents sent Vasyl to study at the Lviv Theological Seminary. When it was closed, he studied at the University of Lviv, in the Faculty of German Philology. Later he worked as a teacher. He was ordained to the priesthood in August 1959. His work as a teacher in a rural school was combined with priestly ministry in the underground Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Father Vasyl Voronovskyi celebrated his first Divine Liturgy in 1960 in the closed church of the village of Kulychkiv in the Sokal District. Later, he secretly celebrated the Holy Liturgy in private homes,

traveled to villages and cities of the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Transcarpathian, Dnipropetrovsk, Ternopil regions, and Kyiv, proclaiming the teaching of Christ.
On 12 February 1970, at 7:00 p.m., during a service at the Finna hamlet of the Krekhiv village council (Zhovkva District), he was arrested by the Bolsheviks and imprisoned. After his release, Father Vasyl was no longer permitted to teach. The only organization that employed him (with the assistance of the Greek Catholic priest Yaroslav Tykhyi) was the Lviv Sanitary-Epidemiological Station. There he worked as a disinfectant worker until retirement. Yet he never abandoned his priestly vocation: every Sunday (his only day off) he celebrated the Divine Services in village churches. Father Vasyl's second arrest occurred exactly fifteen years later—on the same month, day, and at the same hour, only this time in Lviv, in the apartment of a sick woman whom he was hearing in confession. When the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church emerged from the underground, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi served in the churches of Lviv, including the Transfiguration of the Lord and the Church of the Holy Archangel Michael.

"Give Thanks to God, and Not to Me..."

Every Monday, numerous pilgrims from various cities and villages of Ukraine come to the Church of the Holy Archangel Michael, located near Pidvalna Street in Lviv (22 V. Vynnychenko Street). On that grace-filled day, he administers to the faithful the Holy Mysteries of Repentance and the Most Holy Eucharist, celebrates the Divine Service, delivers homilies, reads prayers over the sick and exorcisms for the expulsion of evil spirits, as well as prayers over-

married couples who, though sacramentally united, have no children. After the prayers, he blesses water, oil, vinegar, salt, poppy seeds, and various religious objects, such as icons, rosaries, medals, holy cards, and the like.

These prayers continue from nine o'clock in the morning until noon, and very often even longer. People come to Father Vasyl for spiritual assistance from all over Ukraine, and even from beyond its borders.

During the reading of prayers, Father Vasyl always holds in his hand a miraculous cross, with which he proclaims the word of God, heals the sick, and expels evil spirits. With this cross he has traveled to Rome (Italy), Paris, Ars, and Paray-le-Monial (France), as well as to places of miraculous apparitions of the Mother of God, including the renowned Lourdes, located on French soil. With this cross he has touched miraculous icons and the relics of saints.

Father Vasyl always tells people that they must first ask God's forgiveness for their sins and thus implore from Him the grace of healing. Before these prayers, one should go to confession and sincerely receive the Eucharistic Jesus into one's heart.

Many people who have attended Father Vasyl's prayers later return to thank him for their healing. Together with them, the priest sincerely rejoices in their recovery, both bodily and spiritual; however, he always says: "Give thanks to God, and not to me, so that you too, like the contemporaries of Jesus, may return to your homes praising and glorifying God 'for the grace of healing.'"

Busk District Periodical "Volia Narodu"
26 March 2009, No. 13 (1926)
Iryna Haievska, With Prayer in the Heart

THE WAY OF THE CROSS — THE SPIRITUAL UNION OF GOD WITH HUMANITY

It has already become a good tradition for our distinguished compatriot, the hieromonk of the Studite Rule, Vasyl Voronovskyi, to celebrate the Way of the Cross on Good Friday in his native village of Humnyska.

Guided by God to Fulfill His Designs

Both the residents of the Nadbuzhanshchyna region and pilgrims from various parts of Ukraine awaited this blessed day, having come here in order to offer a communal prayer to the Most High and to receive healing from their spiritual guide.
The history of Christianity is filled with astonishing accounts of renowned servants who dedicated themselves to God's service. Through them, God accomplished great works. This can be attested by everyone who has received healing through the prayers of Vasyl Voronovskyi. For Father Vasyl first experienced this gift of healing as early as 1961. From that time onward, he has bound his entire life to this gift and to service to God.
Vasyl Voronovskyi is a man of great spiritual strength, through whom thousands of believers receive healing and are set upon the true path of God. Assisting them in this is the prayer of Father Vasyl, which works astonishing miracles.

Prayers That God Hears

In the church courtyard, Father Vasyl spoke to the faithful about the wondrous power of prayer, which heals human infirmities and helps one live in harmony with God. In the Bible we read:
"Be anxious about nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).
It is not without reason that people pray to God in the name of Jesus, for each of us believes in the power of prayer. But what must the strength of faith in this prayer be? Father Vasyl cites the words of Scripture:
"Let them ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. Such a person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6–7).

The Way of the Cross — the Union of God with Humanity

After the homily, Vasyl Voronovskyi began to celebrate the Way of the Cross. Over the course of fourteen stations, the spiritual leaders spoke about the thorn-filled path of the Savior to Mount Golgotha—from His condemnation by Pilate to His crucifixion on the Cross and burial in the tomb.
Each station concluded with a common Christian prayer, "Our Father...,"
and penitential hymns performed by the church choir.
The Way of the Cross is a path of union. All believers must be united with God. Yet every Christian must carry a pillar of-

reproach—and each his own. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross each day, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it…" (Luke 9:23–24).

To Receive Protection, Seek God Already Now by Dedicating Your Life to Him

First, what does it mean "to dedicate"? And second, how does one receive protection from God? With these brief questions I turn to Father Vasyl Voronovskyi.

— To dedicate means "to set apart, to consecrate, to appoint"—to give oneself to something without reserve, to give oneself completely, leaving nothing for oneself. Such dedication is demanded of us by the family, and such dedication is demanded of us by the Lord. Our dedication to Him depends upon our faith in the Lord. When we come to understand that our entire life depends on God, that the best plan for our life also depends on the Lord, and when we realize that God indeed has the best plan for our life—then we are able to dedicate ourselves to God.

Of course, dedicating oneself to God requires an act of the will. It is not merely an intellectual decision; it requires a step forward. The fact is that we live amid temptations and the enticements of the enemy of human souls. Through faith in our Lord, we receive protection and are able to understand ourselves, discern what we truly need, and make a decisive step in dedicating ourselves to God.

One can dedicate oneself to God already now, for this is an interior matter known to God and to the individual. A person may continue working at an ordinary job, supporting a family, and the like, while being entirely dedicated to God. This is precisely why it is written: let the one who governs govern, let the one who gives give. At times, the desire to abandon everything and begin doing "God's work" becomes so strong that God must explain to us what He truly wants—namely, that we remain where we are. That very desire, He may regard as an escape from difficulties.

The Way of the Cross in Humnyska, celebrated before Easter together with Father Vasyl, is a source of spiritual healing for many people.

Roman Matviiuk, student of the Faculty of Journalism,
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv
“Visti Kraiu” (Busk) No. 13 (225), 08 April 2010

Section Three
The Fervent Prayer of a Righteous Person Has Great Power

1. Lord, Physician of souls and bodies, have mercy on us!

“As for me, when they were ill, I put on sackcloth, humbled my soul with fasting, and prayed within my heart” (Psalm 35:13).
Father Vasyl Voronovskyi began reading prayers over the sick already during his underground priestly ministry. He first experienced this gift of healing from God several years after his ordination. This miracle took place in 1961 in the village of Fiinyi in the Lviv region.
Once, the parents of a child who frequently awoke at night and screamed intensely asked the young priest Vasyl to read prayers over the child. Father Vasyl now recalls with a smile how at first he did not even know which prayers should be read in such cases. He had no books, because at that time it was very dangerous to carry any liturgical literature, and he did not yet know the prayers for the sick by heart, having only recently received priestly ordination.
At that time, Father Bohdan Repetylo, CSsR, advised him to celebrate the Lesser Blessing of Water, which is served on a parish feast day, and to read the prayer to the Mother of God “O all-pure, immaculate...” from Small Compline.

God heard the sincere prayers of the young priest. The sick child was healed through God's grace and the fervent prayer of Father Vasyl. The joyful news of the child's healing quickly spread throughout the entire Zhovkva district. Every village knew of this miracle.

People weighed down by sorrow began to come to Father Vasyl for help and counsel, as to a priest through whom God heals not only spiritual but also bodily illnesses. Many of the sick experienced great relief, and often even complete recovery, after the prayers he read over them.

People were reminded of the times of Jesus Christ, when through His saving ministry "the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the poor had the Good News preached to them" (cf. Matthew 11:5).

"When I was in prison in 1970," Father Vasyl recalls, "I brought the son of a KGB officer, who was ill with epilepsy, to the village of Dora near Yaremche in the Ivano-Frankivsk region. There, the hieromonk of the Studite Rule, Father Myron, read prayers over the sick, which were very effective. After the death of that priest, I was entrusted with continuing his healing mission."

Father Vasyl, despite the fact that through God's grace he helps many people recover from bodily illness, himself suffers frequent illnesses and has even undergone several major operations.

Many people are undoubtedly surprised that through this humble hieromonk the Lord bestows so many graces of healing upon others, while allowing illness to befall him. People often ask Father Vasyl why he cannot heal himself, and he simply replies:

“I never pray for myself. I ask God for all people. The Lord gives me physical sufferings, and in everything I place myself entirely in God’s will.”

Some people say that this is the devil’s revenge; however, Father Vasyl rejects this interpretation:

“I have often been ill, but this is not the work of the evil spirit—it is God’s permission. In the prophecy of Isaiah it is written that the servant of God must take upon himself the blows of others, for ‘by His wounds they shall be healed’ (cf. Isaiah 53:4–5). And we, the followers of Jesus, must be like Him—that is, we must take upon ourselves the illnesses of others (cf. Matthew 8:17).”

In the Book of Job it is written that the Lord permitted Satan to cause the sons and daughters of the righteous Job to perish, all his livestock to be lost, and finally his body to be covered with grievous sores. Yet Job endured everything patiently, saying:

“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

We must learn, like the righteous Job, to recognize God’s permission in suffering, illness, and misfortune, and to regard these as trials of our faith.

2. By prayer and fasting evil spirits are driven out

“Grant us help against the oppressor, for human help is vain. With God we shall do valiantly; He will tread down our oppressors” (Psalm 60:13–14).

In 1972, the permission granted by Abbot Nykanōr Deyneha for Father Vasyl to read exorcisms was confirmed by Bishop Vasyl

Velychkovskyi, CSsR, later by Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk, and subsequently by Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lubachivskyi.
Exorcism consists of prayers for the expulsion of evil spirits, approved by ecclesiastical authority. Only those priests who have received permission from a bishop may recite them. If any priest or layperson were to attempt to expel evil spirits without the blessing of the bishop, he would expose himself to grave danger.
This is described in the Acts of the Apostles, when the sons of a Jewish high priest attempted, without authorization, to adjure the devil "by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims," and "the evil spirit answered them, saying, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?' And the man in whom the evil spirit was leapt upon them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them so that they fled from that house naked and wounded" (cf. Acts 19:15–16).
Father Vasyl says that most often the evil spirit appears in the form of fire. He recounts his first exorcism as follows:
"Residents of the town of Komarno in the Horodok district of the Lviv region came to me. In one house there, fire began to appear without cause. They poured water on it, yet the flames reignited. When I was asked to come to the village, words appeared on the wall of that house: 'Do not call a priest, or I will take revenge.' The local residents were greatly frightened by these ominous words. After arriving in the village, I immediately announced in church on Sunday that throughout the week I would conduct missions to draw people closer to God. When I said that on Friday I would expel the evil spirit, six couples who had been living without church marriage came on Thursday evening to be married, fearing that the devil expelled from that house might come to their own homes. On Friday, I celebrated the blessing of water and read the exorcism,

including the formula of adjuration. After that, the fire no longer appeared in that house without cause."

On another occasion, in the village of Yaktoriv in the Zolochiv district of the Lviv region, the devil again raged in the form of fire, threatening the lives of two small children. One child somehow ended up in the attic of the house, which was locked from the outside, while the other was found in a cornfield, bound with some kind of hair. The children's parents asked Father Vasyl to read the exorcism. Before his arrival, the devil took revenge on the household by setting fire to the barn and stable in the courtyard.

Father Vasyl recounts this incident as follows:

"When I arrived in the village, I learned that the parents of those children were not sacramentally married and therefore did not receive the Holy Mysteries. First, I married them in church, and then I celebrated the blessing of water in their house, read the exorcism with the adjuration, and from that time everything there became peaceful."

News of the successful exorcism performed by Father Vasyl immediately spread throughout the surrounding area, and faithful of both the Greek Catholic and Orthodox confessions came with processional banners to the courtyard, singing hymns of thanksgiving to God.

In the village of Kobyvoloky in the Terebovlia district of the Ternopil region, for more than two months the evil spirit manifested its power through fire, burning floors, attics, a haystack, and a fence on four homesteads. Firefighters came to extinguish the fires, but nothing helped: as soon as the fire was put out in one yard, it began in another. Eventually, they said they would no longer

come—let the whole village burn if it must! The village was large—900 houses—and all the residents were Orthodox.

Once again, Father Vasyl was called. After he read the exorcism, long-awaited peace came upon the village, and all the faithful glorified God and gave thanks to Him.

Father Vasyl can cite many examples of successful exorcisms. During prayers for the expulsion of evil spirits, as many witnesses attest, various inhuman screams and roars could be heard, and even sounds resembling barking or crowing.

"Indeed," Father Vasyl confirms the testimony of the faithful, "sometimes people scream so loudly that one cannot even hear the prayers I am reading. But after the exorcism, such people often receive healing. Once, a woman screamed throughout the entire Matins service, preventing me from celebrating the service peacefully, but when I performed the exorcism over her, she immediately calmed down and later said that she remembered nothing of what she had done in church."

Just as the evil spirits cried out against Jesus Christ in the region of the Gadarenes, asking why He had come to torment them before the time (cf. Matthew 8:28), so, without doubt, unclean spirits fear the power of the fervent and sincere prayer of Father Vasyl, who comes in God's name to the sick and afflicted, fearlessly expelling the devil and healing the various ailments of our people.

3. The Lviv Bethesda

"Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Hebrew is called Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a great multitude of the sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water... and whoever stepped in after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had" (John 5:1–4).

Every Monday, numerous pilgrims from various cities and villages of Ukraine come to the Church of the Holy Archangel Michael, located near Pidvalna Street in Lviv (22 V. Vynnychenko Street). Before the closed doors of this renowned church, in 1989, thousands of Greek Catholic faithful—led by courageous priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church—took part in the first Greek Catholic services, despite prohibitions and the vigilant surveillance of the KGB authorities. It was here that the revival of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church began.

Every Monday, by God's Providence, people afflicted in soul and body come precisely to this church with faith and hope for healing, so as to depart renewed in spirit, with joy and relief in their hearts, and even restored to health. And all of this is through the grace of God and the fervent prayers of the Studite hieromonk, Vasyl Voronovskyi.

On that grace-filled day, he administers to the faithful the Holy Mysteries of Repentance and the Most Holy Eucharist, celebrates the Divine Service, delivers homilies, reads prayers over the sick and exorcisms for the expulsion of evil spirits, and prayers over married couples who have been crowned in the Church but, for various reasons, have no children. After the prayers, he blesses water, oil,

vinegar, salt, poppy seeds, and various religious objects—for example, icons, rosaries, medals, holy cards, and the like.

These prayers continue from nine o'clock in the morning until noon, and very often even longer. People come to Father Vasyl for spiritual assistance from all over Ukraine, and even from beyond its borders.

During the reading of prayers, Father Vasyl always holds in his hand a miraculous cross, with which he proclaims the word of God, heals the sick, and expels evil spirits. With this cross he has traveled to Rome (Italy), Paris, Ars, and Paray-le-Monial (France), and to places of miraculous apparitions of the Mother of God—especially the renowned Lourdes, on French soil. With this cross he has touched many miraculous icons and the relics of saints.

Father Vasyl always says that people must first ask God's forgiveness for their sins, and only then implore from Him the grace of recovery. Before prayers over the sick, one should go to confession and sincerely receive the Eucharistic Jesus into one's heart.

People must assist the priest with their faith and prayer, while he, praying over them, asks Jesus: "Lord, two thousand years ago You walked the earth and healed the sick, and now You abide in the Most Holy Eucharist; heal these people who have come to You with faith and sincerely beg for healing."

Father Vasyl says: "I always ask the Lord to have mercy and to heal these people, just as once He healed the blind, the deaf, the mute, the paralyzed, and lepers. During the Divine Liturgy, before the Eucharistic sacrifice, whenever I am about to pronounce the words of Jesus, 'Drink and eat,' I continually turn to our Divine Savior with the words: 'Jesus, look how many people have come to You

today with hope for healing. Have mercy on them and help them in their infirmities.'"

Jesus Christ, who comes to us under the appearance of bread and wine, even now—as in the time of His earthly life—heals those who come to Him with faith that, if He wills, He is able to heal them. And when I pronounce the words, "Thine own of Thine own," I remember those people who have come to the Physician of human infirmity, and I ask Him: "Jesus, these are Yours—heal them."

Many people who have attended Father Vasyl's prayers later return to thank him for their healing. Together with them, the priest sincerely rejoices in their recovery, both bodily and spiritual; however, he always emphasizes: "Give thanks to God, and not to me, so that you too, like the contemporaries of Jesus, may return to your homes 'praising and glorifying God' for the grace of healing."

For his prayers over the sick, Hieromonk Vasyl never takes money from people—except if they themselves wish to make a voluntary donation to the monastery, or to offer a stipend for the Divine Liturgy as a sign of gratitude to the Lord. He often reminds the faithful of Christ's words: "Freely you have received; freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

Section 4
Illness — God's Permission

1. A Christian View of Illness

"They brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics, and He healed them" (Matthew 4:24).
Every person must pass through the thorny path of illness in order to be united with God in this temporal life and later in eternity. It is hardly possible that there has ever lived a person in this world who, on the path to God, did not encounter some form of illness.
An unbelieving person very often begins to believe in God only through illness and comes to realize that he has wasted time pursuing material well-being and bodily pleasures, without giving thought to eternity.
When a person looks upon life's difficulties through the eyes of faith, he always places his trust in God and asks Him for help. In illness or sorrow, he realizes that he can endure any sickness, because Christ will lighten all his sufferings, for He said: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). A believing person knows that for the sufferings he patiently endures, God will reward him in eternity, and often already here on earth.
If a person believes, then even in illness he entrusts himself to God as to a loving Father. Yet because it is sometimes difficult, he often prays with the words of Jesus,

"They shall trust in You who know Your name, for You, O Lord, do not forsake those who seek You" (Psalm 9:10).

Jesus Himself pleaded in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me" (cf. Matthew 26:39). Jesus asked God the Father three times that the cup of suffering might pass from Him, yet after the Father did not grant His request, He joyfully drank this cup of suffering to the last drop.

Illness is such a "cup," and a Christian manifests his faith and trust in God by not losing heart when prayer is not immediately answered.

Often illness contributes to the growth of faith in the sick, who come to understand that God is a loving Father not only when He heals illness, but also when He visits them with prolonged sickness. Often God does not immediately answer the prayers of believers, and sometimes it even seems that He has not answered them at all. Therefore, a true Christian must pray with the words of Jesus: "Not my will, but Yours be done" (cf. Luke 22:42). Then a person who has accepted God's will will feel relief in the soul, just as Jesus was comforted by an angel before His terrible sufferings.

People must believe that when they sincerely ask the Lord for help, He will hear them, for "whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22). One must pray with strong faith, "without any doubting," as Saint Apostle James says (cf. James 1:6). Thus, a believing person in illness should first turn to the Lord—the Physician of souls and bodies—for help, and only then seek assistance from people. Prayer is stronger than medicine, because through prayer we cry out to Almighty God, imploring Him for healing.

The first condition for prayer to be heard is reconciliation with God and with one's neighbor. A person must go to confession, ask God's forgiveness for sins, and make amends for harm done to one's neighbor, whether moral or material.

"I flee for refuge to the shadow of Your wings until disaster passes. I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills His purpose for me" (Psalm 57:2–3).

Gratitude to the Lord for everything and trust in Him constitute the inner spiritual state of a person.

Prayer is, above all, praise and glorification of God, which takes place in various ways: people pray with hands raised to heaven, standing or kneeling, singing psalms (it should be noted that the theme of roughly one-third of the 150 Psalms is the glorification of God).

Communal prayer is stronger than personal prayer. The Holy Church was born in an atmosphere of communal prayer. Therefore, not only the sick person should pray, but also his closest relatives, who can help him by receiving the Holy Mysteries and praying together with him, just as in the first centuries of Christianity, when the early Christians "were of one accord and devoted themselves to prayer" (cf. Acts 1:14).

Christians should pray with thanksgiving, because both in the Old and in the New Testaments thanksgiving was always an inseparable part of prayer. The faithful should not complain, but should see illness as a means of purification of the soul and growth in perfection.

God permits illness because He does not desire the death of the sinner, and therefore calls the person to sincere repentance for sins. Very often a sick person remembers God—who is the Physician

above all physicians—only after long wanderings among doctors, and turns to Him as the last hope of salvation. In the Holy Gospel, we read of a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years. Having spent all her possessions on various doctors and charlatans, she finally turned to Jesus with great faith and was healed (cf. Mark 5:25–34).
Thus, if not for illness, many people—like the woman with the hemorrhage—might never have remembered God or come to Him, thereby missing the most important purpose of their life on earth: the salvation of the soul and the attainment of eternal happiness. "Save Your people and bless Your inheritance" (Psalm 28:9).

2. Prayer Is Stronger Than Medicine

(Interview with Father Vasyl Voronovskyi)
"Preserve me, O God, for in You I take refuge. I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from You'" (Psalm 16:1–2).

Many people come to you for prayer already after surgery, often unsuccessfully performed, begging for deliverance. In your opinion, should one turn to a priest before or after an operation?

— God works miracles; therefore, I would not advise turning immediately to a surgeon. If it is a cancerous tumor, after surgery it may not disappear, but on the contrary may progress even more. Whereas in another case, the Lord—having heard the prayers—may work a miracle and the person may become healthy.

Once a woman came to me who had a malignant tumor of the breast. I prayed over her and advised her to rub the affected area with blessed water and oil. After some time, the tumor disappeared. Another woman suffered from a very severe form of cancer and was no longer able even to rise from her bed. I read prayers over her and administered to her the Holy Mystery of Anointing. One month later, she came to me completely healed.

Thus, it is good that people know that prayer is indeed stronger than medicine. I am not saying that medicine is unnecessary, but it is not all-powerful; only God alone is almighty.

People believe that epilepsy is the work of the devil. Do you agree with this?

—I believe that epilepsy, or as people commonly call it "the black sickness," in most cases is a severe illness rather than the result of the activity of an evil spirit. I will give the following example: during the war, one young woman was seriously wounded in the head. Later, having felt a vocation to monastic life, she entered the convent of the Studite Sisters, but soon fell ill with the "black sickness." The nun came to me for prayers twelve times, after which the illness finally departed from her, and now she is completely healthy.

Therefore, I think that epilepsy can only rarely be considered the work of the devil; more often it is the result of a great fright or a serious physical injury.

I know one case where a drunken father came home late at night while his small son was already asleep. In his rage, he beat the child so severely that, from the shock and fear, the child developed this

dreadful illness. After prolonged prayers, the boy, through God's grace, became healthy.
Many people suffering from epilepsy prayed long and persistently for their healing, and God heard their prayers. In this case, doctors are powerless, because they cannot cure the "black sickness," yet after sincere prayer many have been freed from this illness.

Have there been cases in your priestly practice when a child began to speak after you read prayers over him or her?

—Once a woman brought to me a child who was already six years old but still did not speak. I read prayers over the child and anointed the throat and mouth with blessed oil. When the child ran out into the corridor, I heard her already speaking to her mother! Everyone had thought that the child would never speak. The mother wept with joy and to this day thanks God for having shown mercy to her child.

Do you remember any other healings that people received after your prayers?

—Yes, I recall how one woman came to me from Boryslav and complained that she had not slept for three months and that doctors could not help her in any way. I read prayers over her and told her to drink blessed water. I was very glad when, some time later, she returned and said that she no longer suffered from insomnia and was sleeping well.

At times, people brought to me for prayer those suffering from mental illness, and later told me of their complete recovery.

Often a married couple that has been crowned in the Church remains childless. Have there been positive cases when God blessed spouses with children after your prayers?

—I know very well one married couple over whom I read prayers. Today these spouses are happy parents—God granted them two healthy children.
Childless married couples often turn to me for help, and the Lord hears our common prayers, blessing their marriage with children. Unfortunately, not infrequently young couples who cannot have children, having lost hope, begin to go to various doctors and fortune-tellers, who take large sums of money from them but help in no way. I am convinced that spouses should first seek help from God, who is the Giver of life.

Have there been cases when people were freed from alcohol addiction through your prayers?

—Yes, very many. I will give one example that I remember among many others. One man drank heavily, then left his wife and began living with another woman. Later his wife came to me in tears and said that their son was threatening to jump from the fifth floor if his father did not return home.
I went to that man and told him that his child was threatening to end his life, and that if this were to happen, his wife might even lose

her sanity. Then I prayed over him for a long time, and God's grace descended upon him. He sincerely repented, went to confession, and returned to his wife. A true miracle occurred: the man was freed from alcohol addiction and now lives an upright Christian life.

We know that not only the sick came to Jesus, but also people with evil intentions—for example, the Pharisees and scribes—and He exposed them. Have people ever come to your prayers with the intention of harming you or the faithful?

—Not infrequently, people come to the church simply to listen or to observe. When I read prayers over the faithful and see that someone does not even make the sign of the cross, I already suspect that an unbeliever has come.

I always anoint with my finger rather than with a brush, and sometimes I suddenly feel a sharp pain in my finger. Then I ask that person whether he or she has gone to confession, and I hear in reply that they do not confess because, for serious reasons, priests do not grant them absolution. Thus, when a person is not in the state of God's grace, some invisible force lets me know this by a sudden sharp pain in my finger.

There were cases when sorcerers and fortune-tellers tried to harm me inside the church itself, but their evil deeds had no lasting consequences.

One day, I was praying over the sick before the open Royal Doors, but during the prayer a certain priest closed them. I paid no attention and continued praying. Suddenly, I was seized by a very high fever (up to 40°C). Later, after prolonged prayers, it dropped

as sharply as it had risen. Most likely, this was the work of one of those fortune-tellers who were present in the church at that time. Since then, before reading prayers, I always open the Royal Doors and then pray over the sick, because in this way I better realize and more strongly believe that Jesus, who is invisibly present in the Most Holy Eucharist, protects me from any hostile influence.

Section 5
"I Renounce Satan!"

1. What Is Exorcism?

"In My name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17).

Satan (from the Greek diabolos—"slanderer," and from the Hebrew satan—"adversary") is embodied evil, the adversary of God's saving plan, who attacks and tempts human beings toward evil. Although Jesus Christ, by His saving death and Resurrection, destroyed the power of the devil and "trampled down death by death," the final victory over him will take place only at the Second Coming of the Divine Savior to the earth. Together with the devil, his servant—the Antichrist—will also be defeated.

A person comes into this world in original sin, that is, under the power of the devil. For this reason, during Holy Baptism the priest reads an exorcism, the so-called prayer of prohibition, which begins with the words:

"God rebukes you, O devil...,"

and the catechumen (an adult being baptized—editor's note) or the godparents, in the name of the infant, declare:

"I renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his angels, and all his service, and all his pride."

However, there are Christians who later require repeated prayers of exorcism, because in some manner the evil spirit has again taken possession of them.

Exorcism is a prayer in the name of Jesus Christ for the expulsion of an evil spirit. It often happens that the devil gains power over a person who, through a sinful life, has allowed him to oppress the soul and body and to rule over the person. It also occurs that an innocent person—sometimes even an infant—becomes a victim of the devil. Theologians refer to this as the "mystery of evil." In such enslavement, Satan is very often aided by his servants—fortune-tellers, psychics, and others of this kind. Only God Himself can help a person escape from this oppressive state, and He ordinarily does so through an exorcist.

The devil enters the soul of a person through grave sin that the person has committed. However, through Holy Confession and Holy Communion, a person receives sanctifying grace, which drives the evil spirit out of the soul.

At every confession, when the priest grants absolution to the penitent, he says:

"Go in peace and sin no more."

By these words, in accordance with the Holy Gospel, he warns that something worse may happen if the person continues to sin.

The word "worse" means the complete enslavement of a person to the devil, who then no longer allows the person to repent of sins and save the soul. An example of such enslavement is fortune-tellers,

who never sincerely confess and thereby sin against the Holy Spirit. For such people, sadly, heaven is closed, because Jesus said that "the sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come" (cf. Matthew 12:32).

There are exceptional cases when a person who has already abandoned grave sins and frequently receives Holy Communion continues to be tormented by the devil—that is, the evil spirit has not yet departed from the body. In such a case, the exorcist must read prayers for the expulsion of the evil spirit repeatedly.

After the devil has departed from a person's body, the person must strive to live continually in God's grace, frequently receive the Holy Mysteries, observe God's commandments, and then the devil will not be able to rule again over the soul and body.

Exorcism must be approached with caution, because there are cases when a person is suffering from mental illness and should then seek help from a psychiatrist. However, before referring such a person to a psychiatrist, it is necessary to ascertain whether the person is truly not possessed by an evil spirit.

If it is not illness but demonic possession, such a person reacts strangely to holy water and blessed religious objects, such as a cross, a medal, and the like. Often, according to the words of the well-known exorcist Father Gabriele Amorth, some invisible force prevents such a person from entering a church; the person may faint, yawn incessantly, fall into extreme distraction, scream uncontrollably in different voices, roll on the ground, or even blaspheme God.

Other signs of possession include severe illness, marital infidelity in a family where harmony had always reigned, a sudden change of character, constant misfortune, and the like.

We often ask ourselves why a demon wishes to dwell in a human body when its place is in hell. The devil envies the human being, who has an open path to the Kingdom of God and can inherit it by becoming a child of God. He himself has been deprived of this eternal happiness, and therefore he tempts human beings so that they may go with him into eternal condemnation.

Some evil spirits "specialize" in particular passions and sins, tempting a person toward them. When sin becomes habitual, it turns into a vice. In their spiritual writings, the Fathers of the Church—especially Saints Ephrem the Syrian and John Climacus—speak of eight evil spirits of the passions: gluttony, lust, avarice, anger, sadness, acedia, vainglory, and pride.

In the Holy Gospel it is said that the devil loves to dwell in a person as if in his own house. When the demon is driven out, he attempts, according to the words of Jesus Christ, to return:

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it wanders through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'" (Matthew 12:43–44).

These words—that the devil may return and make a person's condition worse than before—were not spoken by our Savior to instill fear of the devil's power, but to call us to constant vigilance over our "house," that is, our soul.

Just as a good householder installs iron bars on the windows of his home so that a thief cannot break in, so too a good Christian must be aware that he must firmly close the windows and doors of his soul to unwanted guests. This means that a person must remain continually in God's grace, which does not allow the devil to regain dominion over him.

2. Resist the Devil, Firm in Faith

(Interview with Father Vasyl Voronovskyi)
“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Can People See the Devil?

— The devil is a spirit; however, at times he can assume a visible form—that is, he can be seen or heard—though usually these are visual or auditory hallucinations. Even in those houses where Satan was burning various things, people saw only the fire.
Nevertheless, in my priestly practice there were cases when a young woman became mute because she saw an evil spirit during a party; and when I was blessing a house, a little boy said he saw the devil running from corner to corner, fleeing from the holy water.

If Something Strange is Happening in a House, is this Necessarily the Work of an Evil Spirit?

— When people are afraid and cannot sleep in a house because they hear incomprehensible knocks, and it even seems to them that someone is walking about the room or speaking, then this is unequivocally the work of an evil spirit—especially if objects fall for no reason or something begins to burn. One should always remember that a good power does not frighten a person, but urges him toward what is good.

How can one be freed from the fear that the devil has brought upon a person?

— Such a person should first of all go to confession and receive Holy Communion, and also wash with holy water. It is advisable to call a priest to bless the house with holy water and oil.
The devil flees from holy water, incense, and the exorcism by which a priest adjures him. He also fears blessed religious objects, but the blessed cross frightens him most of all. At Vespers we sing: "As an invincible weapon You have given us, O Christ, Your Cross; by it we overcome hostile wiles. Having Your Cross ever as our help, O Christ, we easily tear apart the enemy's snares" (in the fourth tone, on Thursday at Vespers—editor's note).

There is nothing surprising when the devil takes hold of a sinful person; but it is said that his servants can even 'work harm' unto death against a believing person who receives Holy Communion daily. What do you think about this?

— I do not entirely agree with such claims. If something like this happens to a practicing Christian, the cause may be weak faith or a poor confession—that is, the concealment of some grave sin in the last confession or in one of the previous confessions.
I often advise people who have such misfortune in the family to make a confession of their whole life and to receive Holy Communion. Then, for nine days, they should sprinkle the house with holy water and sprinkle blessed salt in the shape of a cross under the threshold.

An evil spirit fears blessed salt. Even in the Old Testament there is mention of the prophet Elisha who, by means of salt, made poisonous water wholesome, driving away the devil and putting an end to his evil deeds, saying: "There shall be no more death or barrenness" (cf. 2 Kings 2:19–22).

Must an Exorcist Fast Before an Exorcism?

— In the Acts of the Apostles, where there is mention of the laying on of hands upon Barnabas and Saul, it is said: "Then, after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:3). Today, before the ordination of a candidate to the diaconate, priesthood, or episcopate, bishops, following the apostles, fast and pray.
An exorcist also fasts and prays before driving out the devil, beseeching the Holy Spirit that, through him, He may descend upon the possessed person and free him from diabolical oppression. Yet the exorcist's fast differs from ordinary fasting, when according to the prescriptions of the Holy Church people abstain from meat or dairy. The exorcist fasts by complete abstinence—that is, he eats nothing on the day when he is to expel a demon.

And what would happen if you read an exorcism after you had eaten?

— A priest who is full cannot read an exorcism, because there is a danger that the devil will harm him. It is easier for the evil spirit to take revenge on an exorcist who does not fast before the prayers of expulsion, because then the priest is not in a strong state of prayer.

I had one case when the devil harmed me, and therefore I am now afraid to do so. A young woman, together with friends, was celebrating the New Year. I had already eaten supper and gone to sleep, when her friends came to me asking that I save her: she had been dancing, saw a demon, and from fright became mute.
Taking the Most Holy Mysteries with me, I went to that young woman. I celebrated the blessing of water in the house, read the exorcism, and she began to speak. Then she went to confession, and I gave her Holy Communion.

I returned home around one o'clock in the morning. In the morning I awoke and tried to speak, but there was no sound. The spirit of muteness had left that young woman and passed to me.
After prolonged prayers the devil finally departed from me; but from that time I resolved never again to read an exorcism after I have eaten.

Some priests say that sick people must fast strictly before exorcism prayers are read over them. Do you also believe this?

— Yes, because by prayer and fasting a person is closely united with God and is accordingly open to the action of the Holy Spirit. However, I believe that, in contrast to exorcists, the sick should fast only for one hour before these prayers.

Are you afraid when you go to expel the devil?

— I always place the Most Holy Mysteries upon my chest when I go to read the prayers of adjuration. If Jesus Christ is with me, then I fear nothing. Yet the devil has nevertheless taken revenge on me several times. I will describe one case.

This happened in Lviv several years ago, when I was traveling to the town of Komarno to expel an evil spirit. As soon as I approached the automobile, the rear window instantly shattered into small pieces; then the alarm activated, and the driver could not turn it off. The siren did not cease from the monastery of the Studite Fathers all the way to St. George's Cathedral.

In this way the evil spirit created obstacles for me, so that I would fear him and not go to that town. Nevertheless, I went and successfully read the exorcism there.

I wish to add that the devil, by his vengeance, is not able to inflict spiritual harm upon a person without that person's consent; however, he can take revenge by causing material losses, just as the evil spirits harmed the inhabitants of the region of the Gadarenes by driving their herd of swine into the sea (cf. Matthew 8:28–32). The Lord sometimes permits the evil spirit to inflict material damage upon a person so that, in this way, the person may grow in faith—without complaining and without falling into despair.

Is suicide an act of the evil spirit?

— I think that in many cases the devil urges a person toward suicide. By way of example, I will tell of such an incident.
Once, in the village of Skhidnytsia near Drohobych in the Lviv region, Masons held a gathering of members of their organization, and afterward an evil spirit took hold there, urging the villagers to suicide. In a short period of time, about fifty people ended their lives by hanging. At the request of the villagers, I read the exorcism, celebrated the blessing of water, and organized a large prayer procession throughout the entire area. After these communal prayers with the people, thanks be to God, the number of suicides decreased significantly.
I will give another example. I heard from a priest that the devout daughter of an alcoholic sincerely prayed for her father's liberation from alcohol addiction. And the devil took revenge on that girl by urging her toward suicide. She was already prepared to do it, but she was saved from this act by the rosary prayers being said at that time by her relatives and friends. Through the great power of fervent prayer, the spirit of suicide left that girl.
I wish to say that some cases of suicide are not the result of the devil's activity, but are caused by mental illness. If a psychiatrist confirms the deceased's psychological instability, the Catholic Church permits a church funeral to be celebrated.

3. The Cunning of the Prince of This World

(Interview with Father Vasyl Voronovskyi)
"Be sober, be vigilant. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Recently in Ukraine there have appeared many so-called healers and psychics who claim that they can cure any illness. Do you agree that they are servants of the devil?

— If people knew by what means those "healers" carry out their treatments and what harmful consequences arise from them, they would never seek their help. Often after their so-called healing sessions a person is cured of one illness but falls ill with another, because the diseased organ draws energy from healthy ones. After such "treatments," many people develop severe psychological disorders. A detailed article about such impostor healers was published in the periodical Missionary (nos. 7–8, 2003 — editor's note).
A Christian who goes to be "treated" by various healers or psychics enters into contact with unclean powers and thereby betrays Jesus Christ and faith in Him. When I heard that there was already "some Turk Ilham" who allegedly cures any disease, I told people: "If you go to be treated by a pagan who is connected with the devil, what kind of Christians are you afterward?"
People first go to the servants of the devil seeking help, and then, when nothing helps, they turn to a priest, begging for salvation from the Lord. After that, such people must long implore God to

obtain forgiveness from Him—and even healing, if it be His holy will.

After those sessions people buy photographs of the impostor healers and do not even realize that together with them they are bringing an evil spirit into their homes. They think that psychics or fortune-tellers will help them recover. But this is not so, and by way of example I will recount such a case.

A woman worked with me at the sanitary-epidemiological station. To her neighbor, who could not walk, some psychic from Kyiv came and truly performed a "miracle": the woman walked for two weeks, even without leaning on a cane. However, some time after that "treatment," she could no longer even rise from her bed.

The devil performs some sort of miracle for a week or two—perhaps even for a month—in order to ensnare a person in his nets. But afterward, the person who sought healing from the evil spirit becomes gravely ill with an even worse disease.

The Holy Church forbids the faithful to go to all manner of psychics and fortune-tellers. Already in the Old Testament God revealed through the prophet Isaiah to His people: "I frustrate the signs of liars and make fools of diviners" (Isaiah 44:25).

It is said that some psychics, who are ordinary laypeople—and some of whom are not even Christians—consecrate water. Have you heard of this phenomenon?

— Yes, I have heard of it, and I constantly try to remind people that God's grace has not descended upon such water; worse still, it becomes an instrument of the devil. I advise the faithful not to use

water that was not blessed by a priest, because it will bring only harm.

We know of such healers who pray, keep icons and sacred images in their homes, direct people to confession, even take no money for their services, and yet still arouse suspicion by their actions. What do you think about this?

— To some priests, consecrated persons, and also to laypeople, the Lord grants the grace to heal the sick. However, all of them must fulfill the words of Jesus Christ, who said that everything freely received should be freely given. When a person abuses God's gifts, the Lord takes them away from him. Then very often such a person passes from the ranks of God's instruments into the ranks of the devil's servants, beginning to practice "white" or "black" magic. Representatives of "white" magic often do not themselves suspect that they have come under the power of the devil. They continue to pray, advise the sick to go to church and to receive the Holy Mysteries frequently, yet begin to employ various magical methods (for example, pouring molten wax, removing the "evil eye" with matches, and the like), combining prayer with various pre-Christian (pagan) customs and superstitions.
Very often a practitioner of "white" magic instills fear in people by telling them that they have been "bewitched," thereby leading neighbors and relatives into mutual hostility. The more a person believes that something has been "done" to him, the more it truly can be done to him. A Christian who lives in God's grace should not fear that someone might "bewitch" him or cast a spell upon him.

What is the difference between “black” and “white” magic?

— Representatives of “black” magic, as I have said, always seek to harm a person, unlike representatives of “white” magic, who wish to help him; nevertheless, the result of their actions is also harmful. Yet in both “black” and “white” magic various actions are performed with the help of an evil spirit.

“Black” magic is direct service to the devil, which usually instills fear of failures, misfortunes, various difficulties and hardships; it arouses excessive curiosity about the future, gives rise to a desire to know things that God has hidden for the good of the human person, and fosters the pursuit of power, glory, and wealth at any cost—even at the cost of other people’s lives.

Among the representatives of “black” magic are those who engage in fortune-telling, astrology, palmistry, spiritism, hypnosis, satanism, and the like. They attempt to insult or profane God; they receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ while in a state of sin; they confess insincerely, concealing their sins from the priest in confession; and satanists even break crosses, destroy tabernacles, and profane the Most Holy Mysteries.

In the village of Solonka near Lviv, one Orthodox priest allegedly heals people, but, as people say, “he does not heal, but maims.”

— The healing practices of certain individuals—even priests—can at times have negative consequences. Such people are like a tree that bears bad fruit, and according to evangelical teaching it must be considered a bad tree: “A good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit” (cf. Matthew 7:17). This matter is discussed in detail in the periodical Missionary (no. 2, 2003 — editor’s note).

People come to me and recount that this priest even allows the faithful to look into the chalice. But why should this be done? We know that the chalice contains the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and that we receive Him in Holy Communion. I told people that they receive our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Most Holy Eucharist and that He already dwells in their hearts—so why should they still peer into the chalice?
I was even told that he says to everyone that I am already old and therefore handed over to him the gift of healing. But I do not even know him, nor can I hand anything over to anyone— not even to a Catholic priest. What he says is untrue, and if a priest speaks falsehood, then he is not serving God and is not doing God's work.

What should Christians do so that fortune-tellers cannot harm them?

— I have already mentioned that the best protection for believing people against the servants of the devil is life in God's grace, that is, observance of God's commandments, frequent reception of the Holy Mysteries, and the practice of fasting and prayer.
Fortune-tellers often assure people that misfortune or suffering has come upon them because neighbors or relatives have "done something" to them. They say this in order to give rise to hatred and anger in people—and that is precisely what the devil desires. Practicing Christians should not fear that someone has "bewitched" them—for example, by burying bones under the house or pouring "dead water" under the threshold. Even if people do find something suspicious, they should throw it away, sprinkle the place with holy water, and then no diabolical incantation will have any power.

God's power is almighty! Let people fear nothing, for without God's permission not even a hair will fall from their heads.
Jesus forgave those who tortured Him and before His crucifixion prayed for them with the words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In the same way, we too must forgive everyone, and God will reward us for this, while those who wished to "do something" against us will be punished. God is a just judge: He rewards good and punishes evil.

Do You Permit the Pouring of Wax?

— I have never approved of this and have never advised anyone to go to people who claim to remove the evil eye, fright, and the like by pouring wax. As we know, on the feast of Theophany during the blessing of water the clergy extinguish candles in the water and the wax floats to the surface, but no one practices divination over it, nor draws conclusions from the shapes that appear.

Are Sects a Creation of the Devil?

— To a certain extent, yes, because sects are created by people under the influence of the evil spirit. They are not God's work, for they divide the Church, and Jesus clearly said that there must be one flock and one shepherd (cf. John 10:16).
The very word "sect" comes from the Latin word secare, which means "to cut into pieces one whole." Thus every sect tears away some portion of the faithful from Christ's Church, proclaiming itself the only true Church and even claiming that only its members will attain salvation. Sectarians mislead people with their false

teachings, denying the true doctrine of the Church concerning the Holy Mysteries, the Most Holy Mother of God, the veneration of icons, rejecting Sacred Tradition, the supreme spiritual authority of the Pope of Rome, and so forth.

A Christian who joins a sect seeks salvation outside the Savior and truth outside the one true Teacher, as the well-known exorcist Father Gabriele Amorth has said. The devil wishes to rule over all people, and therefore he employs a cunning tactic: "Divide and rule."

From the very beginnings of the Church, he has sought to divide it into various small groups, creating opposition and hostility in order to destroy Christ's Church, which is God's work. Yet when Christ founded the Church, He assured us that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (cf. Matthew 16:18).

Many people have departed from Christ's Church and gone into various sects because there they can obtain free literature, money for various needs, and the like. By such actions they betray Jesus Christ and His true faith and teaching, just as Judas betrayed Him for the sake of money. Yet the betrayer of Christ did not make use of that money; in despair he threw it into the temple before the Jewish high priests and later hanged himself. Judas did not have the courage to go to Jesus beneath the Cross and ask Him for forgiveness. But I am convinced that if he had done so, Christ would have forgiven him everything. Then Judas would have become a zealous apostle and would have admonished people not to be as greedy and avaricious as he himself had been.

Sects were founded by proud people who were disobedient to the teaching authority of the Church. Such were, for example, Arius,

Macedonius, Apollinaris, and in the later Middle Ages—Martin Luther and his followers.
In modern times, numerous preachers of Krishnaism, Buddhism, and other Eastern religions have appeared in Ukraine, and Islam has also begun to spread significantly. The followers of Muhammad caused much harm on our land, particularly during the Tatar-Mongol invasions, when they spread their faith by fire and sword, acting according to the principle of holy war, the so-called jihad: the more non-Muslims you kill, the sooner you will reach heaven. But that leads not to heaven, but to hell.
I call upon all people who have gone into sects to repentance and conversion, reminding them of Christ's words: "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). When people ask God's forgiveness and zealously adhere to the teaching of the Holy Church, they will be saved, and after death a great reward awaits them in heaven.

Have there been cases when, through your prayers, people who had been drawn into sects or non-Christian religions returned to the true Christian faith?

— Yes. I even know of one young man who joined the Krishnaite sect and shortly thereafter was placed in a psychiatric hospital. His parents called me to help save their son. In conversation with him I said: "My child, that is a diabolical faith, a pagan one—how could you go into that sect?" After a long and sincere conversation he repented and returned to the Catholic Church, went to confession, and received Holy Communion. After that I read prayers over him for healing, and on the second or third day he was discharged from the hospital completely healthy.

Is rock music connected with diabolical power?

— I consider rock music to be satanic. In this music one can sense an echo of satanic orgies, and very often it draws its fans into alcohol and drug addiction. Rock music leads to disorders of the human nervous system.

Young people tell me that they go to discos in order to relax. I advise them instead to go to church to calm their nerves. Let them sing there together with the faithful, participate in the services, go to confession, and receive the Eucharistic Jesus into their hearts. In this way inner peace and tranquility will gradually return to them. Even if people experience distraction during prayer, let them ask Jesus Christ with the words of Peter, who began to sink: "Lord, save me!" The Lord will not delay and will extend to them His helping hand, just as He helped Peter, rescuing him from the stormy waves of the sea.

People must never place excessive trust in themselves. Peter assured Christ that he was ready to suffer for Him, even to die. And what happened? Peter denied Jesus three times. Had he asked Christ that this not happen, perhaps it would not have occurred; instead, he relied self-confidently only on himself.

I often say that people should not rely on their own strength, because by their own strength they can only commit sin. One must constantly ask the Lord God for help.

People watch immoral films, action movies, and horror films, read harmful books, and then, when they come to church, they can no longer pray properly, because the devil suggests to them some sinful thought. Often people themselves are to blame for the distractions they experience during the Divine Service. One of the

commandments of the Church forbids reading harmful books. To this must be added that one should not watch immoral films or corrupt television programs.

In many television programs and films, a frame is subtly inserted that can be perceived only by the subconscious mind. This is a diabolical means of leading people onto a false path, that is, toward committing sin and distancing themselves from God. Even during prayer, that so-called "twenty-fifth frame" may come to a person's mind in the form of temptation.

I read very well about the harmful effects of television in an article by Archimandrite Raphael, which was published in the periodical Missionary (no. 10, 2002 — editor's note).

People often ask whether it is permissible to learn about one's future from clairvoyants and fortune-tellers. What do you think about this?

— People have always wanted to know their future, and therefore they turn for help to fortune-tellers, who are servants of the devil. What interests them, they learn not from God—who alone knows the true future of human beings—but from the evil spirit, who knows certain things from their past and, to some extent, from what may lie ahead.

By God's will, a person is meant to have a good and happy future, yet the Lord has concealed from each of us the path by which we will arrive at happiness. Many people would like to avoid suffering and illness, and for this reason they turn to fortune-tellers and clairvoyants, hoping they will help them do so. But by such actions

they do not make their path easier, but more difficult, because they step onto a road that leads not to happiness, but to ruin.

No one should inquire about his or her destiny through cards, crystal balls, palm-reading, or the like. People should place their present fate into God's hands and fully entrust their future to Divine Providence, fulfilling God's will. In this way they can be confident that they are walking on the right path.

Going to fortune-tellers and seeking knowledge of the future is a sin. The Holy Church forbids all forms of divination, including card-reading, from which a person learns nothing of true value, because it is the devil who cunningly acts in this way in order to distance the person from God. In confession, I tell a person who practices card-reading first to burn the cards and then to come to me for confession.

One must trust in God, not in the devil. If a person experiences some hardship, let him or her place hope in God and ask Him for His blessing. In the Holy Gospel it is said: "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other" (cf. Luke 16:13).

Astrologers claim that a person's fate depends on the movement of the planets, the position of the stars, and so forth. They say that horoscopes can predict a person's future for the next day, week, or year. Yet we all know that God created the human person, gave him reason and free will, and therefore a person shapes his own destiny, and no natural phenomena are capable of determining his future.

However, people say that the predictions of various soothsayers often come true. Is this true?

— Yes, and this can be explained by the fact that the devil has not ceased to be a spirit who knows more than human beings. He cunningly uses this knowledge to deceive people, mixing some truth with falsehood. He does this through his servants—fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and the like.
In the Acts of the Apostles we read about the sorcerer Simon, who "practiced magic and amazed the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great," and about the servant girl who "had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling." Yet all of this they did with the help of diabolical power, because after the demon was cast out of them, they no longer possessed these abilities.

What do you think about hypnosis?

— Some people who possess strong personal energy can influence others, that is, hypnotize them. However, no one has the right to interfere with another person's subconscious, that is, to hypnotize someone, just as no one should knowingly submit to hypnosis.
In a state of hypnosis, a person becomes subject to the one who hypnotizes him, and then it is easy to control his mind and will. The Holy Church resolutely condemns hypnosis and considers it a sin. There exist various forms of "coding" a person with the help of evil spirits, and only exorcists can carry out the "decoding" of a hypnotized person through God's power.

Why is it forbidden to practice spiritism?

— Spiritism consists in invoking evil spirits and the souls of deceased sinners condemned to eternal punishment, who already exist under the dominion of the devil. Spiritism is usually practiced by people who, out of unhealthy curiosity, desire to obtain answers to questions concerning their future.

This summoning of spirits is similar—yet at the same time opposite—to the Christian practice of communion with the other world through prayer, by which a person communicates with God, as well as with the saints or with souls suffering in purgatory. Jesus Christ Himself refers to such communication with the other world in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Luke 16:19–31).

During spiritist séances one can hear various knocking sounds and see objects moving. Often, spiritists, having summoned a soul from hell or an evil spirit, are afterward unable to rid themselves of it. As a result, such people develop insomnia and fear, and at times even manifestations of madness appear. Not infrequently, participation in these séances undermines a person's spiritual and physical health, because he or she comes under diabolical influence.

The Holy Church forbids the faithful to engage in spiritism, considering it a grave sin against the first commandment of God. This practice, moreover, was already forbidden in the Old Testament, when the Lord addressed the chosen people through His prophet with these words:

"Let there not be found among you anyone who consults spirits ... or inquires of the dead. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 18:11–12).

Those who practice spiritism are deceived by the evil spirit, because at times he even speaks the truth. Proof of this can be found in the Gospel according to Saint Mark (cf. 3:11–12), where the demons revealed the mystery that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus did not deny this, but He forbade them to speak of it. Nevertheless, in most cases the devil is a liar, "the father of lies," and adherents of spiritism accept everything they learn from him as pure truth. Christians must not seek the services of spiritists, because by doing so they weaken their faith in the one true God and become victims of the devil. That we should not trifle with the devil and his cunning followers, nor expose ourselves to danger, is also warned by our Divine Savior: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Selected excerpts from the book "Do Not Be Afraid—Only Believe," provided by Father Lozovyi

The hieromonk of the Studite Rule, Father Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi, has remained forever in the memory of his compatriots as a man of extraordinary strength of will and spirit, endowed by the Lord with a charism for the rescue of the weak and those afflicted with spiritual and mental suffering. He was, like the holy Apostle Paul, that chosen instrument to whom God entrusted the task of bearing witness to Him before unbelievers and of enduring much for His name.

Prayer for the Repose

**Grant rest, O our Savior, among the righteous to Your servant,
the Hieromonk Vasyl,
and settle him in Your courts, as it is written.
Disregard, O Good One, his transgressions, voluntary and involuntary,
and all those committed knowingly and unknowingly,
O Lover of mankind!
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and unto ages of ages.
Amen.
From the Virgin You shone forth upon the world,
O Christ our God, and through her You revealed the sons of light—
have mercy on us!
"Let us live in such a way that after death we may behold God in heaven. Amen."**

Biographical Account

Vasyl Voronovskyi was born on May 6, 1929, in the village of Humnyska, Busk District. When he was nine years old, Redemptorist Fathers preached parish missions in his village. The boy joyfully attended the catechetical instructions, and already at that time resolved to become a priest and a missionary.

In 1942 he entered the Minor Theological Seminary in Lviv, but it was soon closed by the Soviet authorities. In 1947 he began studies in the German Department of Lviv University. After completing higher education, he worked as a teacher for seventeen years. Nevertheless, the desire to become a priest never left him. For this reason, he secretly studied in the underground seminary, acquiring theological knowledge from underground Greek Catholic bishops Mykola Charnetskyi and Nykanor Deineha, as well as from Father Bohdan Kovalskyi and the Studite hieromonk Yanuarii Voronovskyi, his uncle.

On August 14, 1959, Bishop Ivan Slezjuk ordained Vasyl Voronovskyi to the diaconate, and the following day, on Sunday, he ordained him to the priesthood.

The newly ordained priest, Father Vasyl, celebrated his first Divine Liturgy in a church closed by the Soviet authorities in the village of Kulychkova, near Belz. During the following eleven years, Father Vasyl taught on weekdays and on Saturdays and Sundays traveled through villages of the region, secretly celebrating Divine Liturgies. The police and KGB authorities learned of Father Vasyl's pastoral activity and began to monitor him and organize covert surveillance. God long protected His faithful servant from godless enemies, yet eventually they succeeded in apprehending Father Vasyl while he

was hearing the confessions of two people in the village of Fiina, Zhovkva District. He was arrested and imprisoned in the Zhovkva prison. This occurred at 7:00 p.m. on February 2, 1970.

Afterward, he was dismissed from Secondary School No. 78 in the city of Lviv, where he had been teaching. For more than half a year, Father Vasyl searched for employment. With the assistance of Father Yaroslav Tykhyi, he obtained a position as a disinfection inspector at the regional sanitary-epidemiological station. He worked there for nineteen years, until retirement, while continuing to carry out his pastoral ministry in various villages of the region.

Father Vasyl was arrested a second time exactly fifteen years later. This took place in Lviv. On this occasion, he was detained for a shorter period and fined.

Even after this, he continued courageously traveling through Galician villages, bringing the Word of God to the people. In doing so, he often recalled the words of the Psalmist:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"
(Psalm 27:1; Missionary, 2003)

Once again, an ambush was prepared for a third arrest. This occurred in the village of Khlopchytsi in the Sambir District, where Father Vasyl had been invited to baptize a child. During the celebration, an entire bus of police officers arrived at the house. Father Vasyl managed to hide the phelonion and the chalice beneath a dressing cabinet. One of the officers discovered these sacred items but pretended not to notice them, which proved to be of great help. Father Vasyl was taken to the Sambir KGB office, detained overnight, and fined fifty rubles.

In 1989, a favorable time arrived for the legal activity of the long-suffering Greek Catholic Church. During the following six years, Father Vasyl served selflessly in the Lviv churches of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the Holy Archangel Michael on Zelena Street.

After the Studite monks were granted a building for a monastery, the superior hegumen instructed Father Vasyl to serve in the monastic community. Later, he was assigned to pastoral ministry in a large parish consisting of three villages: Univ in the Peremyshliany District, and Slovita and Yaktoriv in the Zolochiv District.

The harsh labor of the underground years and the constant nervous strain caused by police and KGB ambushes and arrests took their toll. At times, during Divine Services, Father Vasyl felt so unwell that people had to escort him—or even carry him—out of the church. It became necessary to consider medical treatment.

Yet even in the hospital, Father Vasyl lived with his thoughts fixed on the Church and the Divine Liturgy. From there, on one occasion, he traveled to the village of Syvorohy in the Peremyshliany District. During the Divine Liturgy, monks supported him so that he would not collapse from dizziness. However, after Father Vasyl received the Most Holy Mysteries, the illness departed completely. To this day, he affirmed that it was precisely in the Church of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God in Syvorohy that he was healed by God's command and grace.

Publicly, Father Vasyl recited exorcism prayers against the influence of satanic forces upon people.

He always recalled the power of healing prayer over the sick and the practice of exorcism with love and hope in God's power.

“I once transported, while imprisoned, the son of a KGB officer who was suffering from the ‘black illness’ to the Studite hieromonk Father Myron in the village of Deru near Yaremche. This helped greatly. After Father Myron’s death, I was entrusted with continuing his healing mission, which I had practiced since 1961, though unofficially. Permission from the hegumen Father Nykanor Deineha was later confirmed by Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky and Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk, and later by Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky. I received official permission to perform exorcisms from the bishop in 1972.”

For more than forty years, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi healed people through prayer and protected the afflicted from the snares of evil forces. The Lord God Himself chose him for this great mission, taking into account the priest’s deep piety and his boundless fidelity to his native Church.

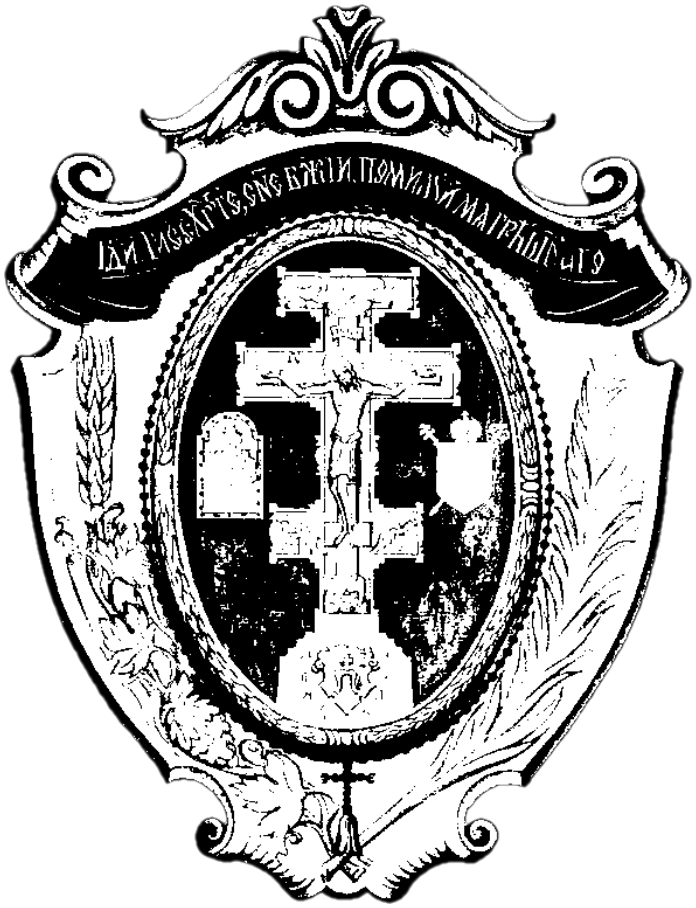
Father Voronovskyi was known and revered throughout all of Ukraine. He was welcomed by both adults and children alike. Of small stature, kind-hearted, always smiling, and sincerely open in heart and soul, people marveled at where he found such strength to overcome evil and human suffering. To this Father Vasyl replied simply:

“From God—through holy prayer.”

Do Not Be Afraid, Only Believe

(The Life and Ministry of the Hieromonk of the Studite Rule

Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi)



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INTRODUCTORY WORD

Our Divine Savior gave His apostles the mandate to heal every disease and infirmity and the authority to cast out evil spirits (cf. Mt 10:1). Today this authority is passed on by the successors of the apostles—the bishops—to certain priests whom we call exorcists. When speaking of Ukraine, one of the most well-known exorcists in our Church is the Studite priest, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi.

I have known Father Vasyl as a simple, approachable, and deeply believing person since the 1980s, when God granted me—the Ukrainian, originally from Yugoslavia—the grace to visit the Ukrainian land for the first time, the land where my father was born.

In the hospitable quarters of the underground Greek Catholics in Lviv, I encountered among numerous bishops and other clergy a modest priest, an ordinary worker of the sanitary-epidemiological station, who spoke little and smiled constantly. He carried with him a large leather bag full of poison with which he exterminated rats.

At the same time—and no one suspected this—he also carried with him a small bottle of holy water, a homemade prayer book for reading prayers over the sick, and the Most Holy Mysteries, with which he strengthened in spirit those who were turning to God. From the very first glance it was evident that he was a self-sacrificing and courageous priest who would yet accomplish

much good for our Church and people, despite being watched at every step.

When I visited Lviv a second time in the autumn of 1986 and again had the opportunity to meet Father Vasyl, he confided to me in a whisper that his younger brother—Hieromonk Yulian of the Studite Rule—had recently been consecrated a bishop. I remember assuring him that I would keep this as the secret of sacramental confession. This joyful news, however, soon became known to all after our Church emerged from the underground at the end of 1989.

From the time I arrived for permanent ministry in Ukraine, our cooperation with Father Vasyl in the spiritual field became more active. We often went on missions together, in particular in the cities of Horodok and Chervonohrad, the urban-type settlement of Komarno, the village of Stoianiv in the Sokal region, and elsewhere.

Many times I visited him as a patient in the hospital, and I was struck by the fact that he did not cease helping sick people who stood in long lines before him to regain the health of body and soul. Although doctors forbade him to rise from his bed, he prayed for hours over the sick, and when he was cautioned that this was dangerous for his health, he replied: "I pray for the health of others, and God will strengthen my health."

His diligence is admirable, and despite his weakened state of health and his no longer young age, he is always present where he is needed, especially at prayer vigils and supplications on the occasion of religious and national feasts. More than once he visited the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, where during missions in the Church of St. Nicholas on Askold's Grave he celebrated various liturgical services and read prayers for healing and exorcisms over a large number of faithful of different confessions.

Father Vasyl prays continually, especially while traveling, for all those who have entrusted themselves to his prayer. His selfless service to God and to people, as well as his unconditional fidelity and obedience to the Holy Church, are deeply impressive.

During the most difficult times of the underground period, he traveled throughout the whole of Ukraine, preaching the word of God to the people and administering the Holy Mysteries. Now he is no longer able to visit everyone, but we hope that through this little book his spirit of prayer will become present throughout Ukraine and even beyond its borders. We wish to believe that it will bring great spiritual benefit and consolation to all Christians.

The basis of the book *"Do Not Be Afraid, Only Believe"* is a comprehensive interview which Father Vasyl gave to the editors. We thank Father Vasyl for agreeing to the publication of this edition and for permitting the use of archival photographs in it.

In addition to the aforementioned interview with Father Vasyl, the booklet makes use of certain materials published in various periodicals, and it also includes prayers for various needs.

The book is addressed to a wide circle of readers, above all to believing people, in particular the sick and the afflicted. Its aim is to lead every person to strong faith. As the saying goes, when there is distress, then one turns to God. We wish to believe that all those whom God has helped in a difficult moment will remain on the path of salvation for the rest of their lives.

After the revival of our Church, self-appointed healers sprang up in Ukraine like mushrooms after rain—healers who do not heal but wound souls. The need to address such topics as prayer being stronger than medicine and the means of healing the soul and body proved to be extremely urgent. This, in fact, prompted us to gather all this material into this small book.

Another reason why this publication proved to be especially necessary is that in previous publications about healing through prayer, Father Vasyl and his noble activity were not always described with full accuracy.

The book *"Do Not Be Afraid, Only Believe"* is dedicated to the Christian family on the occasion of the Year of the Family, with the aim of spiritually healing the Christian family of Ukraine.

The editors of this publication deemed it necessary to make certain corrections, both linguistic and theological, to the prayers for various needs, in particular to the protective prayer of the holy hieromartyr Cyprian.

Fr. Josaphat Vorotniak, OSBM

Freely ye have received, freely give

Didst thou ever dream, O dear mother mine,
When thou didst bring thy sons forth into light,
That they with hell itself would wage their war,
And at their word the darkness quake with fright?

Julian, thy son, is now a bishop made;
Our Vasyl Voronovskyi—exorcist:
At his command the fiend doth flee in haste,
And grievous wounds are healed that long did persist.

He is most meek and kind, exceeding diligent;
In life unassuming, humble in his ways,
Enwrapped in warmth and in God's holy light,
From underground he bears the spiritual blade always.

All hell doth tremble, sensing him afar;
The Lord bestows on him the strength to strive.
Though weak in flesh, in spirit strong is he:
Where tears once fell, now joy is made alive.

All men the father comforts and consoles;
A smile abides forever on his face.
He oft doth counsel men to drink the holy water;
Belovèd is he in every town and place.

His word is firm, as tempered steel made fast;
His faith in God is granite, strong and sure.
With love for men it sparkles, bright and clear,
And draweth all as doth the lodestone pure.

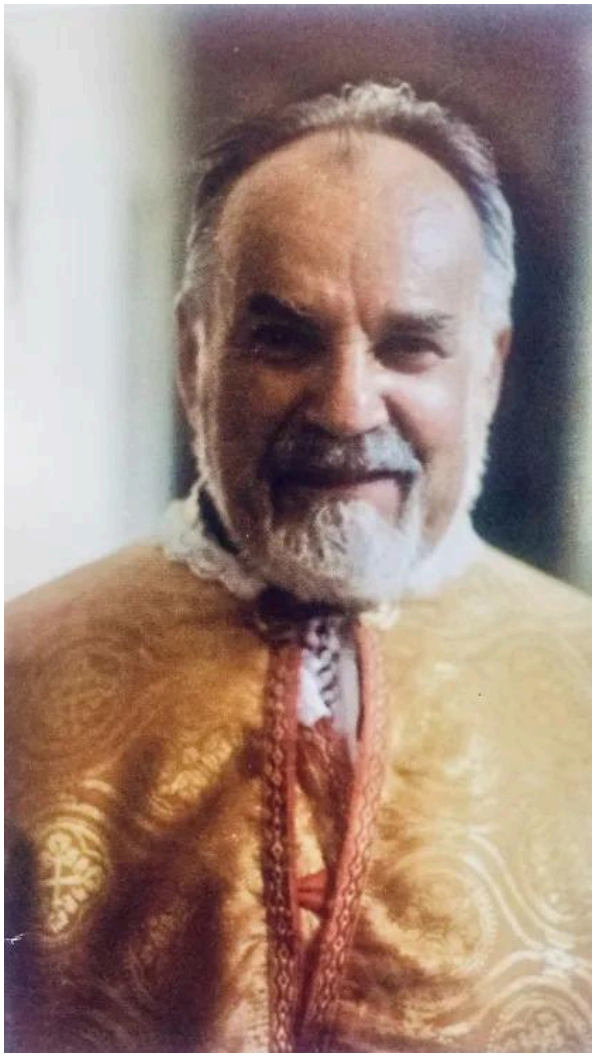
From spells and envy and from cursed words,
From evil eyes he healeth in a breath;
And in his preaching teacheth God's own folk
To fear no superstitions born of death.

"Give thanks to God, not unto me," saith he,
Doth Father Vasyl evermore repeat;
"What freely hath been given, freely give—
The Lord of Hosts bless every soul ye meet."

Fear not, but only believe! Truth shall rise again;
The power of darkness shall for ever fail.

In Christ's own life none shall victorious stand;
For every poison God prepares a heal.

Love Dīvchur,
the city of Chervonohrad



Chapter 1

The Blessed Voronovskyi Family

And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."
(Matthew 12:49–50)

The village of Humnyska in the Busk District of the Lviv Region lies spread out upon the picturesque land along the Western Bug and is known for the ancient Voronovskyi family, which gave to the persecuted Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church zealous and self-sacrificing pastors.

In the devout, large peasant family of Semen and Yevfrosyniia Voronovskyi, who had thirteen children, two sons grew up—Josyf and Ivan. The parents raised their sons in such a way that one of them, in our catacomb Church, dedicated his life to the service of God as a hieromonk, while the sons of the other—Vasyl and Yurii—perhaps following the example of their uncle Josyf, continued to labor zealously in Christ's vineyard not only during the time of cruel persecutions and trials, but also after the UGCC emerged from the underground.

Josyf Voronovskyi was born on October 7, 1913, and was the youngest in the family. In 1938 he entered the novitiate of the

Studite Fathers in Univ, receiving at his clothing the monastic name Januarius. After successfully completing the Minor Seminary in 1944, he entered the underground Theological Seminary in Lviv. He completed the classical department of the Ivan Franko Lviv University. On November 7, 1958, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Mykola Charnetskyi, CSsR (now Blessed of the UGCC). He was a zealous hieromonk, a noble and benevolent man. He died on the day of his eightieth birthday—October 7, 1993—having foretold the day of his death. He is buried at the Yaniv Cemetery in the place of eternal rest of the monks of the Studite Rule.

In the family of Ivan and Kseniia (née Kostyshyn) Voronovskyi three sons were raised—Mykhailo, Vasyl, and Yurii. The parents were deeply devout, and therefore from early childhood raised their children in the Christian spirit. Every Sunday the entire family went to the parish church of Saint Michael the Archangel in Humnyska: in the morning to the Divine Liturgy, and in the evening to Vespers.

Perhaps already then, by God's Providence, one of the Voronovskyi sons—Vasyl—received from the Lord, through the intercession and protection of Saint Michael, the gift to fight against evil power and to cast it out in the name of Jesus Christ, which in a particular way would later manifest itself during the years of his priestly ministry. And, remarkably, today he carries out his ministry in the Lviv

church of Saint Michael. His entire life—from Humnyska to Lviv—unfolds under the sign of Saint Michael, the warrior against evil spirits and the conqueror of Lucifer.

Each year the Voronovskyi family traveled on pilgrimages. Once the father was bathing in a river and began to drown, but was miraculously saved by grasping a branch. From that time on, together with his wife and children, he went every year on pilgrimages to give thanks to God for the miraculous deliverance from death: on the feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist—to the town of Olesko in the Busk District, to pray there before the miraculous icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; and on the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God—to the village of Mylatyn in the Busk District, where there is the miraculous image of the Merciful Crucified Jesus Christ (on August 14, 1747 this image was transferred to the church of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers in Mylatyn, and eight years later, on January 15, 1755, Archbishop Mykola Ignatii Wyżycki proclaimed it miraculous. During his visit to Ukraine in June 2001, a copy of this miraculous image was presented to His Holiness Pope John Paul II—editor's note).

The parents instilled in their three sons a love for God and a desire to serve Him; therefore, it is not surprising that two of them—Vasyl and Yurii—resolved to choose the path of consecrated life, despite the difficult and dangerous times of the UGCC's underground

existence. Vasyl will be discussed in the subsequent chapters of this book; for the present, we shall briefly acquaint the reader with the life stories of his two brothers.

The elder brother, Mykhailo, was born on November 2, 1924, in the village of Humnyska. After completing secondary school, he studied at the Ivan Franko Lviv University in the Ukrainian Department. He worked as a teacher of Ukrainian language and literature at the secondary school in Humnyska, and later in Lviv. He was married and had a son, Ihor. He died on November 18, 1998.

The younger brother, Yurii, was born on May 5, 1936, in the village of Humnyska. After completing secondary school, he studied at the Ukrainian Printing Institute in Lviv. During his studies, in 1958, he entered the monastery of the Studite Rule of the underground UGCC, receiving at his clothing the monastic name Yulian, and he made his perpetual vows in 1963.

After graduating from the institute in 1961, for fifteen years he held various positions—from engineer to department head—at the Lviv Design and Engineering Institute. Later, because of his confession of faith, he was compelled to leave his position and

worked as an ordinary laborer in a boiler house until the time when our Church emerged from the underground. While being a monk and working in state employment, he studied at the underground Lviv Theological Seminary. On October 27, 1968, he received priestly ordination in Lviv from Bishop Vasyl Velychkovskyi, CSsR (now Blessed of the UGCC). He served as prior, and later as abbot, of the Studite monastery.

Episcopal consecration was conferred upon Hieromonk Yulian by Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk on September 30, 1986, in Lviv. In 1991, the Head of the UGCC, Myroslav Ivan Cardinal Lubachivskyi, appointed him Archimandrite of the monks of the Studite Rule in Ukraine and Rector of the Holy Spirit Lviv Theological Seminary.

In 1993, Bishop Yulian became administrator of the newly established Sambir–Drohobych Eparchy, and on April 17, 1994, his enthronement as the ruling bishop of the said eparchy took place, the office which he continues to hold to this day.

Chapter 2

The Life and Ministry of Hieromonk Volodymyr Vasyl Voronovskyi

1. Priestly and Monastic Vocation

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.
(Psalm 84:2–3)

Vasyl was born on May 6, 1929, in the village of Humnyska. The day of his birth, which fell on the very feast of Saint George the Wonderworker, seemed to be yet another sign from heaven that the boy would one day become a zealous fighter against the devil throughout his difficult life, having this great SAINT continually as his patron and intercessor.

When Vasyl was nine years old, the Redemptorist Fathers (monks of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer—editor's note) preached missions in his native village. The young boy joyfully attended the missionaries' sermons, which were held every morning and evening for two weeks. Already then, in the distant year of 1938, he firmly resolved to become a celibate priest and missionary, so that in this way he might have as many opportunities as possible to labor for God, the Church, and his people.

In 1942, the fourteen-year-old Vasyl entered the Minor Theological Seminary in Lviv, where he studied for several years until the day it was closed by the Soviet authorities. In 1947, he entered the German Department of the Ivan Franko Lviv University, which he completed in 1953. For seventeen years he worked as a teacher of the German language in villages of the Kamianka-Buzka and Busk districts of the Lviv region, and later at Secondary School No. 78 in Lviv, until 1970, when he was arrested for the first time by the KGB.

While working as a teacher, Vasyl continued to strive to become a priest and prayed to God for the granting of this grace. Each day he recited the prayer "Hail Mary" that the Mother of God might help him to become a good priest, for he asked but one thing of God, like the psalmist:

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
that I may behold the beauty of the Lord,
and may visit His temple.
(Psalm 27:4–5)

Vasyl studied at the underground Theological Seminary in Lviv, acquiring knowledge of theology from the clandestine Greek Catholic bishops Mykola Charnetskyi, CSsR, and Nykanor Deineha of the Studite Rule, as well as from the Studite hieromonk

Januarius Voronovskyi and the underground Greek Catholic priest Bohdan Kovalskyi, pastor of the village of Humnyska.

On the feast of the Annunciation of the Mother of God, April 7, 1959, Vasyl was to receive priestly ordination at the hands of Bishop Mykola Charnetskyi. Having arranged this beforehand with the bishop, he came to him to receive the Holy Sacrament of Priesthood. But when he arrived in Lviv, he learned that the bishop-martyr had departed to the Lord for his eternal reward several days earlier. Bishop Mykola died in the odor of sanctity, and instead of being Vasyl's ordainer on earth, he became his intercessor and protector in heaven.

Vasyl did not lose heart and immediately rejected the first thought that he was not destined to become a priest. He understood that God had given him this trial in order to see whether His faithful servant would not lose hope, whether he would continue with firm steps toward the fulfillment of his priestly vocation. Vasyl did not cease to pray fervently for the granting to him of God's grace of the priesthood:

Plead thou my cause, O Lord, because I have walked in my innocence:
and trusting in the Lord, I shall not be moved.
(Psalm 26:1)

The long-awaited day came four months later. On August 14, 1959, Bishop Ivan Sleziuk (now Blessed of the UGCC) ordained Vasyl to the diaconate, and on the following day, Sunday, August 15, he ordained him to the priesthood. As the motto of his priestly ministry he chose the words of the psalmist:

O Lord, thou wilt open my lips:
and my mouth shall declare thy praise.
(Psalm 50:17)

Father Vasyl celebrated his first Divine Liturgy in a church in the village of Kulychkiv of the Sokal District in the Lviv region (near the town of Belz), which had been closed by the godless authorities. He concealed this joyful news—that he had become a priest—from his parents, so that they would not worry that he might be arrested and that all of them would be deported to Siberia. Only after half a year did his parents learn that their son had indeed been ordained a priest.

Several years after his priestly ordination, in 1965, Father Vasyl entered the monastery of the Studite Fathers, faithfully fulfilling the words of Jesus Christ:

And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake,
hall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.
(Matthew 19:29)

At his clothing, Vasyl received the monastic name Volodymyr. However, since at that time the Church was underground, he retained his baptismal name so as not to endanger his fellow monks. Even today people know him simply as Father Vasyl (and by this name we shall continue to refer to him—editor's note). In 1970 he made his perpetual monastic vows, offering his life to God as a whole-burnt sacrifice.

2. Pastoral Ministry during the Underground Period of the UGCC

2.1. The Beginnings of Priestly Ministry

Blessed are ye, when they shall revile you for the name of Christ: for the Spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you.
(1 Peter 4:14)

After his ordination, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi carried out pastoral ministry in Lviv. Every Saturday and Sunday he traveled through the villages of the Lviv region, where he secretly celebrated the Divine Liturgy, since on weekdays he worked as a teacher.

Most often Father Vasyl celebrated the services in the homes of underground Greek Catholics, and at times even in churches that had been closed by the communists. Although people were forbidden to gather in churches for common prayer—and the local authorities kept vigilant watch over this—they nevertheless had

keys and, when possible, came to the church on Sundays to hear the Holy Liturgy together and to raise their prayers to God.

Father Vasyl frequently traveled to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the villages of Fiina and Mokrotyn in the Zhovkva District. Most often he fulfilled his priestly ministry in two villages, which may rightly be called his underground parish: Dobriany in the Horodok District and Khlopchytsi in the Sambir District. There, for thirty years, the zealous hieromonk secretly celebrated various services and administered the Holy Mysteries to the faithful.

Father Vasyl always *"studied to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;* he sought *justice, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart;* he was *gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves"* (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15, 22, 24–25).

For eleven years of sacrificial pastoral service in the towns and villages of the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil regions, and even in many regions of Eastern Ukraine, Father Vasyl, by God's Providence, avoided arrest. The KGB constantly monitored him, yet when its agents came to arrest him, some higher power seemed to close their eyes, and they—embittered and blinded by hatred toward God's servant—departed empty-handed.

There was an instance in the village of Susoliv in the Sambir District of the Lviv region when someone reported Father Vasyl to the militia while he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy there. The militia arrived promptly. The people then managed to lead him unnoticed to the house of a party official, where he hid until morning. On another occasion, the local faithful resorted to cunning: they dressed Father Vasyl in rags, placed a staff in his hand, and thus, under the guise of a beggar, he safely left the village, which had been surrounded by KGB agents.

Once Father Vasyl arrived in the already mentioned village of Dobriany to baptize a child. Afterwards, the people placed him in a postal vehicle, which the authorities usually did not inspect, and by it he could safely reach Lviv. Several kilometers before Horodok, a sudden thought came to Father Vasyl to change to a bus. Understanding this to be the voice of God, he did so and safely arrived in Lviv. Later he learned from acquaintances that the KGB had stopped the postal vehicle in Horodok to verify the truth of a denunciation made by one of the inhabitants of Dobriany.

This was truly a proof of God's Providence, of which Father Vasyl could say with the psalmist:

Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done,
and thy thoughts which are to us-ward:
they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee:

if I would declare and speak of them,
they are more than can be numbered.
(Psalm 40:5)

God truly guards His faithful servants from their enemies, does not betray their hope in Him, and does not forget them, assuring them through the prophet:

Fear thou not; for I am with thee:
be not dismayed; for I am thy God:
I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
Can a woman forget her sucking child?..
Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.
(cf. Isaiah 41:10)

On the feast of the Nativity of Christ, the militia arrived in the village of Khorosnytsia in the Yavoriv District of the Lviv region. Father Vasyl was celebrating the festive Divine Liturgy in the village church. There were, however, so many people present that they did not allow the policemen to enter the church, enabling the priest to withdraw to a safe place.

Often in the life of Father Vasyl it happened that God in a wondrous manner protected him from the ambushes of *"ravening wolves in sheep's clothing"* (cf. Matthew 7:15). Yet gradually and inexorably the time drew near when he too would have to suffer

much for the Lord, who tested His servant through sufferings for fidelity, as gold is tested by fire.

2.2. Blessed are Those Persecuted for Righteousness

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect,
that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.
(2 Timothy 2:10)

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi became, like the holy Apostle Paul, that chosen vessel to whom God entrusted the task of bearing witness to Him before the godless and of suffering much for His name's sake (cf. Acts 9:15–16). Father Vasyl was arrested for the first time on February 12, 1970, on the feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs. This occurred at seven o'clock in the evening in the already mentioned village of Fiina. There he had baptized two children and heard the confessions of about forty people. The policemen arrived during the Divine Liturgy, when the people were reciting the Creed; yet, surprisingly, they allowed the priest to give Holy Communion to the faithful and to complete the Holy Liturgy, and only afterwards did they arrest him.

Father Vasyl was then sentenced to fifteen days of imprisonment in the Zhovkva prison and fined fifty rubles. Each day in prison he

performed heavy labor, and each night he was taken for interrogations to the head of the KGB. In such moments he prayed for his enemies, continually recalling the words:

For I have heard the slander of many; fear was on every side:
while they took counsel together against me,
they devised to take away my life.
(Psalm 31:13)

After the first arrest, Father Vasyl was dismissed from Secondary School No. 78, where he had been teaching. For nearly half a year he sought employment but could not find work even as a simple laborer in a factory, despite having a higher education. In those days, if a person did not work, he was considered a "parasite," for which one could also be imprisoned.

With the help of Father Yaroslav Tykhyi, who for a short time served as head of the Lviv sanitary-epidemiological station, Father Vasyl obtained employment at that institution, which was "renowned" for having a large number of underground UGCC priests working there.

For nineteen years, until his retirement, Father Vasyl worked by day as a disinfectant worker, and in the evenings traveled through nearby villages, where he carried out his pastoral ministry. He was constantly watched by the KGB, yet he often entered so-called

"pass-through" houses that had a second exit onto another street, thus escaping their vigilant eye.

Thus they were often caught by these ruses; at times they would stand for hours near a building, waiting for him to come out. In such moments he recalled the words:

Mine enemies daily oppress me:
for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.
They gather themselves together, they hide themselves,
they mark my steps.
(Psalm 56:2, 6)

Although Father Vasyl lived under the constant surveillance of the KGB, he nevertheless celebrated the Divine Liturgy every day, and on feast days even two or three Holy Liturgies in different villages.

Father Vasyl was arrested a second time exactly fifteen years later, on the same day and at the same hour as the first arrest, only this time it occurred in Lviv. He had been summoned to hear the confession of a gravely ill woman, and the KGB agents followed him to her house. This time the priest spent only one night in KGB custody, again paying a fine of fifty rubles. For him, however, this arrest was more painful than the first, because during the investigation they confiscated the most precious items for a priest: the phelonion, the chalice, the Holy Gospel, the service book, and even the antimension.

Nevertheless, Father Vasyl did not yield. During the Divine Liturgy he used holy relics in place of the antimension, an ordinary glass instead of a chalice, and he knew the texts of the Liturgy and the prayers by heart.

After the second arrest, Father Vasyl continued to minister courageously in the villages of the Lviv region, calling people to conversion and repentance, often recalling the words of the psalmist:

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
(Psalm 27:1)

This period, however, was not long, for already in 1988, in the village of Khlopchytsi, where Father Vasyl was to baptize a child, he was arrested for the third time. A full bus of militiamen arrived in the village, preceded by a "bobik" carrying their superiors. They came for him as though for the greatest criminal. At that moment he was not afraid, but recalled the event in the Garden of Gethsemane, when they came out against his Divine Teacher with swords and clubs, as against a robber, to seize Him (cf. Matthew 26:55).

The militiamen surrounded the house and conducted a search. Father Vasyl hid the phelonion and chalice under a wardrobe, and although one of the militiamen discovered them, he did not give any

sign. Afterwards Father Vasyl was taken to the Sambir KGB office, from which he was released at one o'clock in the morning, since they had no substantial evidence, having again imposed a fine of fifty rubles.

He did not complain of fatigue or exhaustion, nor did he regret the money, but he grieved only for the relics of Saint Brigid, the holy cards, and the medals that were irretrievably taken from him during the search.

Father Vasyl always preserved peace of spirit, remembering that all happens by God's permission:

Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.
(Psalm 27:3)

3. Priestly Ministry after the Legalization of the UGCC

I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.
(Psalm 52:9)

Throughout his priestly ministry during the underground period of our Church, Father Vasyl Voronovskyi repeatedly reminded the faithful of the persecutions and the courageous perseverance of the first Christians, even unto their martyrdom, recalling to them the

words of the Lord: *"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"* (Matthew 10:22).

Just as by God's Providence, through the edict of Emperor Constantine in the year 313, the free profession of the Christian faith came about, so in 1989 the empire of evil—the Soviet Union—collapsed, and a favorable time arrived for the legal activity of our much-suffering Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

For six years Father Vasyl served sacrificially in the Lviv churches of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of Saint Michael the Archangel (on Zelena Street). After the Studite monks were given a building for a monastery on V. Vynnychenko Street, the hegumen directed him to serve in the monastic community. Later Father Vasyl carried out pastoral ministry in a large parish consisting of three villages—Univ of the Peremyshliany District, and Slovita and Yaktoriv of the Zolochiv District in the Lviv region.

However, the heavy labor of Father Vasyl during the underground years soon made itself felt. During the divine services he became so unwell that people had to carry him out of the church. For the space of a month he underwent thorough treatment, and during that time he was released from priestly duties; yet he celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily, though greatly weakened and suffering from severe dizziness.

The merciful Lord remembers His good and faithful sons. Once, despite his poor state of health, Father Vasyl traveled at the request of the parish priest to the village of Syvorohy in the Peremyshliany District of the Lviv region. During the Divine Liturgy two Studite monks supported him so that he would not fall. But after he received the Most Holy Mysteries, the dizziness immediately ceased. Father Vasyl confidently affirms that a miracle occurred in the Church of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God in Syvorohy, for from that time he has taken no medicine whatsoever for that ailment.

On the last Sunday of each month Father Vasyl endeavors to come to the chapel of the Transfiguration of the Lord in his native village of Humnyska, so that after the Divine Liturgy he may read prayers over the sick and perform the blessing of water. Many people from the surrounding villages and towns of the Lviv region gather at this holy place.

This sanctuary, so dear to his heart, was built by benefactors in 1993, after the UGCC emerged from the underground, on the site of the parental home in which Redemptorist Fathers Mykhailo Vynnytskyi and Mykhailo Lemishka once frequently gave retreats and celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily, and later the Studite Fathers—descendants of the illustrious Voronovskyi family: Januarius, Yulian, and Vasyl.

In 1996 the new chapel was consecrated by Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk. Later a bell tower was built beside the chapel. Father Vasyl wished to install a water shrine and a Way of the Cross in the courtyard, similar to that in Lourdes in France, but unfortunately there was insufficient space for this.

In the Church of Saint Michael in Humnyska, the faithful of the UOC–KP and the UGCC pray in turn; but when Father Vasyl comes to the village, all Christians gather for the divine services, regardless of confessional affiliation.

At present Father Vasyl serves in the Church of Saint Michael the Archangel at the Monastery of Saint Joseph of the Studite Fathers in Lviv. He goes to Univ, where he once served as permanent pastor, very rarely—once or twice a year. He often participates in missions in many villages and cities of Western and Eastern Ukraine, where he reads prayers for the healing of the sick, preaches sermons, hears confessions of the faithful, and performs the blessing of water.

Father Vasyl refuses no one; he goes everywhere he is asked to come. It is true that after the difficult underground years he frequently undergoes treatment, but even while repeatedly staying in hospitals, he does not cease to carry out sacrificially his multifaceted priestly ministry.

Chapter 3

The Fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man Availeth Much

1. O Lord, Physician of souls and bodies, have mercy on us!

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth:
I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
(Psalm 35:13)

Father Vasyl Voronovskyi began to read prayers over the sick already during his underground priestly ministry. He first perceived this gift of healing from God several years after his ordination, in 1961. This miracle took place in the village of Fiina in the Lviv region. Once the parents of a child who awoke at night and cried out loudly asked the young hieromonk Vasyl to read prayers over her.

Father Vasyl now recalls with a smile how at first he did not even know which prayers should be read in such cases. He had no books, for at that time it was very dangerous to carry any liturgical literature, and he did not yet know the prayers for the sick by heart, since he had only recently received priestly ordination. Then Father Bohdan Repetylo, CSsR, advised him to serve the Lesser Blessing of Water, which is celebrated on a parish feast, and to read the prayer to the Mother of God, "Immaculate, undefiled...," from Small Compline.

God heard the sincere prayers of His faithful servant. The sick child was healed through God's grace and the prayer of Father Vasyl. This joyful news quickly spread throughout the entire Zhovkva District. In every village people knew of this miracle of the young priest.

People burdened with sorrow began to come to him for help and counsel, as to a priest through whom God heals not only spiritual but also bodily infirmities. Many of the sick received great relief, and often even complete healing, after the prayers which Father Vasyl read over them. And they were reminded of the times of Jesus Christ, when through His saving work *"the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (cf. Matthew 11:5).

"While I was imprisoned in 1970," recalls Father Vasyl, "I brought the son of one KGB officer, who was suffering from the black sickness, to the village of Dora near Yaremche in the Ivano-Frankivsk region. There the hieromonk of the Studite Rule, Father Myron, read prayers over the sick, which were very helpful. After the death of Father Myron, I was entrusted with continuing his healing mission. Later this permission of Abbot Nykanor Deineha was confirmed by Bishop Vasyl Velychkovskyi, CSsR, and Metropolitan Volodymyr Sterniuk, and afterward by Myroslav Ivan Cardinal Lubachivskyi."

Father Vasyl, despite the fact that through God's grace he helps many people to recover from bodily illness, himself very often

suffers from sickness and has even undergone several serious operations.

Surely many wonder why through him the Lord grants such numerous graces of healing to His children, yet sends illness to him. People often ask Father Vasyl why he does not heal himself, and he only replies with a smile: "I never pray for myself. I ask God for all people. The Lord gives me physical sufferings, and in everything I wholly accept the will of God."

Some people say that this is the devil's revenge, but Father Vasyl objects: "I have been sick many times, but this is not the work of the evil spirit; it is God's permission. We know that the prophet Isaiah wrote that the servant of God must take upon himself the blows of men, *'by whose stripes we are healed'* (cf. Isaiah 53:4–5). And we, the followers of Jesus, must be like Him and take upon ourselves the infirmities of others" (cf. Matthew 8:17).

In the Book of Job it is written that the Lord permitted Satan to bring it about that the sons and daughters of the righteous Job perished, all his flocks were lost, and finally his body was covered with grievous sores. Yet the righteous man endured all things patiently, saying: *"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."* We too must learn, like the righteous Job, to perceive in sufferings, illness, and misfortunes the permission of God, and to regard them as a testing of our faith.

2. By Prayer and Fasting Evil Spirits Are Cast Out

Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.
Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.
(Psalm 60:11–12)

In 1972 Father Vasyl Voronovskyi received permission from the bishop to read exorcisms.

Exorcism consists of prayers for the expulsion of an evil spirit, approved by ecclesiastical authority. Only those priests who have received permission from the bishop may recite them. If any priest or layperson were to attempt to cast out evil spirits without the bishop's authorization, he would expose himself to grave danger. This is spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, when the sons of a Jewish high priest attempted, without authorization, to adjure the devil *"by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth,"* to which *"the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded* (cf. Acts 19:15–16).

Father Vasyl says that most often the evil spirit manifests itself in the form of fire. Concerning his first exorcism, he relates:

"The inhabitants of the urban settlement of Komarno in the Horodok District of the Lviv region came to me. In one house there,

fire began to appear without cause. They poured water on it, yet the flames flared up again. It is noteworthy that when they invited me to come to the village, words appeared on the wall of the house in which the fire was occurring: *'Do not call the priest, for I shall take revenge.'* The local people were greatly frightened, and when I arrived in the village, a great fear was felt everywhere.

After my arrival, I immediately announced in the church that for the course of a week I would conduct missions in order to draw the people back to God. And when I said that on Friday I would cast out the evil spirit, on Thursday evening six couples who had been living together without marriage came to be married in the church—they were afraid that once the devil was driven out of that house, he might come to their own homes. The next day I performed the blessing of water and read the exorcism in that house, including the adjuration. After this, the fire no longer appeared there without cause."

On another occasion, in the village of Yaktoriv in the Zolochiv District of the Lviv region, the devil again began to rage in the form of fire, threatening the lives of two small children. One child somehow found himself in the attic of the house, which was locked from the outside, and the other in the garden among the corn, bound with some kind of hair. The parents of the children asked Father Vasyl to read an exorcism. And once again, before his arrival, the devil took revenge on the people—setting fire in the yard to the

barn and the stable. Father Vasyl recounts this incident as follows: "When I arrived in the village, I learned that the parents of those children were not married in the Church and therefore did not receive the Holy Mysteries. First I married them in the church, and then I performed the blessing of water in their house, read the exorcism together with the adjuration, and from that time everything there became calm."

As always, word immediately spread throughout the surrounding area about the successful exorcism performed by Father Vasyl, and the faithful of both the Greek Catholic and Orthodox confessions came with banners into the courtyard, singing hymns of thanksgiving to God.

In the village of Kobyvoloky in the Terebovlia District of the Ternopil region, for more than two months the evil spirit manifested its power through fire, burning floors, attics, a haystack, and fences on four homesteads. Firefighters came to extinguish the fires, but nothing helped, for when the fire was put out at one homestead, it would begin burning at another. Finally they said they would come no more, even if the whole village were to burn. The village was large—nine hundred houses—and all the inhabitants were faithful of the Orthodox Church.

Once again, Father Vasyl was called. After he read the exorcism, the long-awaited peace came upon the village, and all the faithful glorified God and gave Him thanks.

Father Vasyl can cite many examples of successful exorcisms. During prayers for the expulsion of evil spirits, as many witnesses attest, it even happened that various inhuman screams and roars were heard, and even sounds resembling barking or crowing.

"This is true," Father Vasyl confirms the testimony of the faithful, "at times people cry out so loudly that one cannot even hear the prayers which I am reading. Yet after the exorcism such people often receive healing.

Once a woman cried out throughout the entire Matins, not allowing me to celebrate the service peacefully; but when I performed the exorcism over her, she immediately became calm and later even said that she remembered nothing."

Just as the evil spirits complained against Jesus Christ in the land of the Gadarenes, asking why He had come to torment them before the time (cf. Matthew 8:28), so, without doubt, the unclean spirits fear the power of the prayer of Father Vasyl, who comes in the name of God to the sick and the afflicted, fearlessly casting out the devil and healing various infirmities among our people.

3. Lviv's Bethesda

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool,
which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda,
having five porches.
In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,

of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water...
for whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in
was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.
(John 5:2–4)

Every Monday numerous pilgrims from various cities and villages of Ukraine come to the Church of Saint Michael the Archangel, located near Pidvalna Street in Lviv (22 V. Vynnychenko Street).

Before the closed doors of this renowned church in 1989, thousands of Greek Catholic faithful, led by courageous priests of the UGCC, took part in the first Greek Catholic services despite prohibitions and the vigilant surveillance of the KGB authorities. Here the revival of the UGCC began. It is precisely to this church that many people, afflicted in soul and body, come with faith and hope for healing, so as to leave it renewed in spirit, with joy and relief in their hearts, and many of them also physically healed. All this comes about through the fervent prayers of the Studite hieromonk Vasyl Voronovskyi.

On that grace-filled day he administers to the faithful the Holy Mysteries of Repentance and the Most Holy Eucharist, celebrates the Divine Liturgy, preaches sermons, reads prayers over the sick and exorcisms for the casting out of evil spirits, and prayers over married couples who are childless. After the prayers he blesses water, oil, vinegar, salt, poppy seeds, as well as various religious items, such as icons, rosaries, medals, holy cards, and the like.

These prayers last from nine o'clock in the morning until midday, and very often even longer. People come for spiritual help to Father Vasyl from all over Ukraine, and even from beyond its borders.

While reading the prayers, Father Vasyl always holds in his hand a miraculous cross, with which he proclaims the word of God, heals the sick, and casts out evil spirits. With this cross he has been in Rome (Italy), Paris, Ars, and Paray-le-Monial (France), and at places of miraculous apparitions of the Mother of God, especially in renowned Lourdes on French soil. With this cross he has touched miraculous icons and the relics of saints.

Father Vasyl always tells people that they must first ask God's forgiveness for their sins and thus implore from Him the grace of healing. Before these prayers one should go to confession and sincerely receive the Eucharistic Jesus into one's heart.

People must assist him by their faith and prayer, and he, when praying over them, in turn asks Jesus: "Lord, Thou didst walk upon the earth two thousand years ago and didst heal the sick, and now Thou abidest in the Most Holy Eucharist—heal these people who have come to Thee with faith, beseeching healing."

Father Vasyl says: "I always ask the Lord to have mercy on and heal these people, just as once He healed the blind, the deaf, the mute, the paralytic, and the lepers. During the Divine Liturgy, before the Eucharistic sacrifice, whenever I am about to pronounce the words

of Jesus, 'Drink ye all of this' and 'Take, eat,' I continually turn to our Divine Savior with these words: 'Jesus, behold how many people have come to Thee today in hope of healing. Have mercy on them and help them in their infirmities.'

Jesus Christ comes to us under the appearances of bread and wine, and just as He healed people in times past, so now He heals those who come with faith that He is able to heal them. And when I pronounce the words, 'Thine own of Thine own,' I also remember those people who have come to the Physician of human weakness and ask Him: 'Jesus, these are Thine—heal them.'"

Many people who have been present at Father Vasyl's prayers later come to him to give thanks for their healing. The priest rejoices sincerely with them in their recovery, both bodily and spiritual, yet he always says: "Give thanks to God, and not to me, so that you too, like the contemporaries of Jesus, may return to your homes *'glorifying and praising God'* for the grace of healing."

Father Vasyl never takes money from people, except if they wish to make a voluntary offering to the monastery or to give for the Divine Liturgy as a sign of gratitude to the Lord. He often reminds the faithful of Christ's words: *"Freely ye have received, freely give."* (Matthew 10:8)

Chapter 4

Illness — God's Permission!

1. A Christian View of Illness

And they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments,
and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy;
and he healed them.
(Matthew 4:24)

Every person must pass through the thorny path of illness in order to be united with God in this temporal life and later in eternity. It is difficult to imagine that there has ever lived a person in this world who, on the way to God, did not experience some form of illness.

An unbelieving person very often begins to believe in God only through sickness and comes to realize that he has squandered his time pursuing material well-being and bodily pleasures, without giving thought to eternity.

When a person looks upon life's problems with the eyes of faith, he always places his hope in God and asks help of Him. In illness or sorrow he realizes that he will be able to endure any sickness which Christ will lighten for him, for He said: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28)

The believing person knows that for those sufferings which he patiently endures, God will reward him in eternity, and not infrequently already here on earth.

When a person believes, even in illness he entrusts himself to God as to a loving Father. Yet because at times it is difficult for him, he often, like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, prays: *"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me."* (cf. Matthew 26:39)

Jesus asked the Father three times that the cup of suffering might pass from Him, and after the Father did not grant His request, He joyfully drank this cup of suffering to the very last drop.

Every illness is such a cup, and a Christian manifests his faith and trust in God by not losing hope when his prayer is not answered. In many cases illness has contributed to the growth of faith in the sick, who came to understand that God is a loving Father not only when He heals from illness, but also when He visits them with prolonged sickness.

Often God does not immediately answer the prayers of believers, and there are times when it even seems that He has not answered them at all. Therefore a true Christian must act according to the example of Jesus, that is, add to his prayer the words: *"Not my will, but thine, be done."* (cf. Luke 22:42)

Then the person who accepts God's will will feel relief in the soul,

just as Jesus was comforted by an angel before His terrible sufferings.

People must believe that when they sincerely ask the Lord for help, the merciful God will hear them: *"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."* (Matthew 21:22) One must pray with strong faith, *"nothing wavering,"* as Saint James says in his epistle (cf. James 1:6).

A believing person in illness must first turn for help to the Lord, the Physician of souls and bodies, and only afterward seek help from men. Prayer is stronger than medicine, for by prayer we cry out to the Almighty God, imploring from Him healing.

The first condition for a prayer to be heard is reconciliation with God and with one's neighbor. A person must make amends for the wrong done to another, both moral and material. The second condition for God's hearing of prayer is the inner disposition of the person: gratitude to the Lord for all things and trust in Him.

Prayer is first of all praise and glorification of God in various ways: people pray with hands lifted toward heaven, standing or kneeling, singing psalms (the theme of a third of the one hundred fifty psalms is the praise of God).

More powerful than personal prayer is communal prayer. The Church was born in an atmosphere of common prayer. Therefore it is necessary that not only the sick person pray, but also his closest

relatives, who help him, approaching—like the Holy Mysteries—and praying together with him, as it was in the first centuries of Christianity, when the early Christians *"were with one accord continuing steadfastly in prayer"* (cf. Acts 1:14).

Christians must pray with thanksgiving, for in both the Old and the New Testaments thanksgiving was always an integral part of prayer. The faithful should not murmur, but rather see in illness a means for the purification of the soul and growth in perfection.

God permits illness because He does not desire the death of the sinner, but urges him toward repentance. Very often, after long wanderings from doctor to doctor, a person remembers God, the Physician above all physicians, and turns to Him as to the last hope of salvation. In the Gospel there is told the story of a woman who had suffered from an issue of blood for twelve years. Having spent all her substance on various physicians and charlatans, she at last, with great faith, turned to Jesus and was healed (cf. Mark 5:25–34).

Thus, were it not for illness, many—like the woman with the issue of blood—would never remember God nor come to Him, thereby missing the most important purpose of their life on earth: the salvation of their immortal soul and the attainment of eternal happiness.

2. Prayer Is Stronger than Medicine

(Interview with Father Vasyl Voronovskyi)

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.
O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord:
my goodness extendeth not to thee.
(Psalm 16:1–2)

Many people come to you for prayer already after an operation, often one that was unsuccessfully performed, and they beg for help. In your opinion, should one turn to a priest before or after an operation?

God works miracles, and therefore I would not advise turning immediately to a surgeon. If it is a cancerous tumor, after the operation it may not disappear, but on the contrary may progress even more. Whereas in another case, perhaps the Lord, having heard the prayers, will perform a miracle and the person will become healthy.

Once a woman came to me who had a malignant tumor on her breast. I prayed over her and advised her to rub the afflicted place with holy water and oil. After some time the tumor disappeared. Another woman suffered from a very severe form of cancer and was no longer even able to rise from her bed. I read prayers over her and administered to her the Holy Mystery of Anointing. After a month she came to me completely healed.

Thus it is good for people to know that prayer truly is stronger than medicine. I do not say that medicine is unnecessary, but it is not all-powerful; only God alone is almighty.

People believe that epilepsy is the work of the devil. Do you agree with this?

I think that epilepsy, or as people say, "the black sickness," in most cases is a terrible illness and not the result of the action of an evil spirit. I will give such an example. During the war one young woman was severely wounded in the head. Later, having felt a calling to monastic life, she entered the monastery of the Studite Sisters, but soon fell ill with the "black sickness." The nun came to me for prayers twelve times, after which the illness finally departed from her, and now she is completely healthy.

Thus, I think that epilepsy can only rarely be regarded as the work of the devil; more often it is the consequence of a severe injury (for example, when some nerve has been damaged) or of great fright.

I know of one case when a drunken father came home late, and his small son was already asleep. In a fit of rage he beat the child, and from that fright the child fell ill with this terrible disease. After long prayers, by God's grace, the boy became healthy.

Many people have prayed long and unceasingly, and God heard their prayers, healing those afflicted with epilepsy. In such cases doctors

are powerless; they cannot cure the "black sickness," but after prayer many people have been freed from this illness.

Have there been cases in your priestly practice when a child began to speak after you read prayers over him?

Once a woman brought to me a child who was already six years old but had not yet spoken. I read prayers over the child and anointed his throat and mouth with holy oil, and when he went out into the corridor, he began to speak.

Everyone had thought that the child would never speak. The mother wept for joy and to this day gives thanks to God that He had mercy on her child.

Do you remember any other healings that people received after your prayers?

Yes, I recall how a woman once came to me from Boryslav and complained that she had not slept for three months and that doctors could do nothing for her. I read prayers over her and told her to drink holy water. I was very glad when, after some time, she came back and said that the sleeplessness was gone and that she was sleeping well.

At times people were brought to me from psychiatric hospitals for prayers, and later they told me that those patients had recovered and were discharged from the hospital.

Often married couples are unable to have children. Have there been positive cases when God blessed couples with offspring after your prayers?

I know very well one married couple over whom I read prayers. Now this couple are happy parents—God gave them two healthy children.

Childless married couples often come to me for help, and the Lord hears our common prayers, blessing their marriage with children. Unfortunately, not infrequently young couples who cannot have children, having lost hope, begin to go from doctor to doctor and to fortune-tellers, who take large sums of money from them but help in nothing, instead of first turning for help to God, who is the Giver of life.

Have there been cases when people were freed from alcohol addiction through your prayers?

Yes, very many. I will give one example which I remember among many others. One man drank heavily, then left his wife and began living with another woman. Afterwards his wife came to me with tears in her eyes and said that their son was threatening to throw himself from the fifth floor if his father did not return home.

I then went to that man and told him that the child wished to end his life by suicide, and that if this were to happen, the woman might even lose her mind.

Then I prayed over him for a long time, and God's grace acted very powerfully upon him. He sincerely repented, confessed, and returned to his wife. Truly a miracle occurred: the man was freed from alcohol addiction and now leads a decent Christian life.

We know that not only the sick came to Jesus, but also people with crafty and evil intentions, for example the Pharisees and scribes, and He exposed them. Have people ever come to you for prayers with the intention of harming you or the faithful?

Not infrequently people come into the church simply to listen or to observe. But when I read the prayers and see that someone does not even make the sign of the cross, I already surmise that an unbeliever has come.

I always perform the anointing with my finger and not with a brush. And more than once, when I make the sign of the cross on a person's forehead, I suddenly feel a sharp pain in my finger. Then I ask that person whether he has been to confession, and I hear the reply that he does not go to confession, because for serious reasons the priests do not grant him absolution.

Thus, when a person is not in the state of God's grace, some invisible power lets me know this by sharply pricking my finger. Otherwise, all people are the same to me.

There have been cases when sorcerers and fortune-tellers attempted to harm me within the very church itself, but their evil deeds did not have lasting consequences.

One day I was praying over the sick before the open Royal Doors, but during the prayer some priest closed them. I paid no attention to this and continued praying. Suddenly I was seized by a very high fever (up to 40° C). After prolonged prayers it dropped as sharply as it had risen. Most likely this was the work of one of those fortune-tellers who were present in the church at that time.

Since then I always open the Royal Doors before reading the prayers and then pray over the sick, because in this way I better realize and more strongly believe that Jesus, who is invisibly present in the Most Holy Eucharist, protects me from any hostile influence.

Chapter 5

"I Renounce Satan!"

1. What Is Exorcism?

"In my name shall they cast out devils." (Mark 16:17)

Satan (from the Greek *diabolos* — "slanderer," and from the Hebrew *satan* — "adversary") is, as it were, incarnate evil, the adversary of God's saving plan, who assails and leads human beings into sin. And although Jesus Christ, by His saving death and Resurrection, destroyed the power of the devil and "by death overcame death," the definitive victory over him will take place only at the Second Coming of the Divine Savior upon the earth. Together with the devil, his servant the Antichrist will also be defeated.

Man comes into this world bearing original sin, that is, under the dominion of the devil. For this reason, during Holy Baptism the priest reads an exorcism—the so-called prayer of prohibition—which begins with the words: *"The Lord rebukes thee, O devil."* And the catechumen (an adult being baptized) or the godparents, in the name of the infant, declare: *"I renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his angels, and all his service, and all his pride."*

Yet there are Christians who later require repeated prayers of exorcism, because in one way or another the evil spirit has again gained power over them.

Exorcism is a prayer in the name of Jesus Christ for the expulsion of an evil spirit. It often happens that the devil gains dominion over a person who, through a sinful life, has allowed him to oppress the soul and body and to rule over them. There are, however, cases when the victim of the devil is an innocent person, or even an infant. Theologians, not knowing the reason for this, call it the mystery of evil.

In this enslavement to Satan, his servants—fortune-tellers, occult practitioners, and the like—very often play a role. Only God Himself can help a person emerge from this oppressive state, and He ordinarily does so through an exorcist.

The devil enters the soul of every person by means of grave sin. But through holy Confession and the reception of Holy Communion, a person receives sanctifying grace, which drives the evil spirit out of the soul. At every confession, when the priest gives absolution to the penitent, he says: *"Go in peace and sin no more,"* that is, in accordance with the Holy Gospel, he warns him that something worse may befall him if he continues in sin.

The word *"worse"* signifies the complete enslavement of a person to the devil, who then no longer allows that person to repent of sins

and to save the soul. A clear example of such total enslavement are sorcerers and fortune-tellers, who never sincerely confess and thus sin against the Holy Ghost. For such people, sadly, heaven is closed, because Jesus said that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven *"neither in this world, nor in the world to come"* (Matthew 12:32).

There are, however, exceptional cases in which a person who has already renounced grave sins and frequently receives Holy Communion continues to be tormented by the devil—that is, the evil spirit has not yet departed from the body. In such a case, the exorcist must repeatedly read the prayers for the expulsion of the evil spirit.

But after the devil has departed from a person's body, that person must strive to live continually in the grace of God, frequently approach the Holy Mysteries, observe the commandments of God, and then the evil spirit will not be able again to gain dominion over the soul and body. Before proceeding to the reading of an exorcism, one must act with great caution, because there are cases in which a person is suffering from mental illness and should seek help from a psychiatrist. However, before referring such a person to a physician, it is necessary to ascertain whether the individual is not in fact possessed by an evil spirit.

If it is not an illness but a demonic possession, such a person reacts in an unusual manner to holy water and to blessed religious objects,

such as a cross or a medal. Very often, according to the testimony of the exorcist Fr. Gabriele Amorth, some invisible force prevents such a person from entering a church; the person may faint, yawn incessantly, fall into extreme distraction, scream uncontrollably in different voices, roll upon the ground, or even blaspheme God. Other signs of possession, indicating that exorcism is necessary, include severe illness for which physicians are unable to establish a diagnosis, marital infidelity in a family where harmony had always prevailed, a sudden change of character, continual misfortune, and similar disturbances.

We often ask ourselves why a demon would wish to dwell in the body of a human being, when its proper place is hell. The reason is that the devil envies man, who has an open path to the Kingdom of God and may inherit it by becoming a child of God. The devil himself has been deprived of this eternal happiness; therefore he tempts man so that man might follow him into eternal condemnation.

Some evil spirits "specialize" in particular passions and sins, enticing human beings toward them. When a sin becomes habitual, it turns into a vice. In their spiritual writings, the Fathers of the Church—especially Saint Ephrem the Syrian and Saint John Climacus—speak of eight evil spirits of the passions: gluttony, lust, avarice, anger, sadness, despondency, vainglory, and pride.

In the Holy Gospel it is said that the devil loves to dwell in a person as though in his own house. When a demon is driven out, he attempts, according to the words of Jesus Christ, to return again: *"And when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith: I will return into my house from whence I came out"* (Matthew 12:43–44).

These words, warning that the devil may return and make a person's condition worse than before, were not spoken by our Divine Savior in order to instill fear of the devil's power, but to call us to constant vigilance over our house—that is, over our soul.

Just as a prudent householder places iron bars upon the windows of his home so that a thief may not break in, so too must a good Christian be conscious of the need to shut tightly the windows and doors of the soul against unwelcome guests. This means that a person must remain continually in the grace of God, which does not allow the devil to gain dominion over him again.

2. Resist the devil, steadfast in faith

(Interview with Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi)

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

(James 4:7)

Can people see the devil?

The devil is a spirit who, however, can at times assume a visible form—that is, he can be seen or heard—but usually these are visual or auditory hallucinations. Even in those houses where the devil set various things on fire, people saw only the fire itself.

Nevertheless, in my priestly practice there were cases when a young woman was struck dumb after seeing an evil spirit during an evening gathering, and when I was blessing a house, a small boy said that he saw the devil running from corner to corner, fleeing from the holy water.

If something strange happens in a house, is the cause the action of an evil spirit?

When people are afraid and cannot sleep in a house because they hear strange knocking sounds, or even feel as though someone is walking through the rooms or speaking, this is unquestionably the work of an evil spirit—especially if objects fall without cause or something begins to burn. A good force does not frighten a person, but leads one toward good.

How can a person rid himself of the fear brought upon him by the devil?

Such a person must first of all make a good confession and receive Holy Communion, and also wash himself with holy water. It is advisable to call a priest to bless the house with holy water and oil.

The devil flees from holy water, incense, and exorcism, by which the priest adjures him. He also fears blessed religious objects, but most of all he fears the blessed Cross. Therefore, at Vespers we sing:

"As an unconquerable weapon hast Thou given us, O Christ, Thy Cross; by it we overcome the enemy's wiles. Having ever Thy Cross as our help, O Christ, we easily tear apart the enemy's snares."

(from the fourth tone at Thursday Vespers — editor's note)

There is nothing surprising when the devil possesses a sinful person, but some say that his servants can even 'bewitch' a believing person—one who receives Holy Communion daily—unto death. What do you think about this?

I do not entirely agree with this. If such a thing happens to a practicing Christian, the cause may be weak faith or a bad confession—that is, the concealment of some grave sin in the last confession or in one of the previous confessions. I often advise people, when such misfortune occurs in a family, to make a confession of their whole life, to sprinkle the house with holy water,

and then to scatter blessed salt in the form of a cross beneath the threshold, and to do this for nine days. The evil spirit fears blessed salt. Even in the Old Testament there is mention of the prophet Eliseus, who by means of salt made poisoned water wholesome, driving away the devil and putting an end to his evil work, saying these words: "There shall be no more death, nor barrenness" (cf. 4 Kings 2:19–22).

Must an exorcist fast before reading an exorcism?

Yes, and for this we find confirmation in Sacred Scripture. In the Acts of the Apostles it is written concerning the laying on of hands upon Barnabas and Saul: "Then they fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away" (Acts 13:3). Following their example, even today before the ordination of a candidate to the diaconate, priesthood, or episcopate, bishops fast and pray.

An exorcist likewise fasts and prays before the expulsion of the devil, imploring the Holy Spirit that through him He may descend upon the possessed person and free him from diabolical oppression. However, the fasting of an exorcist differs from the ordinary fast prescribed by the Church, when one abstains from meat or dairy. The exorcist fasts by complete abstinence, that is, he eats nothing on the day on which he intends to expel a demon.

And what would happen if you read an exorcism after having eaten?

A priest who is satiated cannot read an exorcism, because there exists a danger that the devil may harm him. It is easier for the evil spirit to take vengeance on an exorcist who does not fast before prayers of exorcism and thus does not remain in a strong disposition of prayer. I had such a case when the devil harmed me, and therefore I am now afraid to do so.

Once a young woman was celebrating the New Year with friends. I had already eaten supper and gone to bed, when they came to me in the middle of the night to save her: she had been dancing, saw a demon, and from fear became mute. Taking the Most Holy Mysteries with me, I went to her. I blessed the house with holy water, read the exorcism, and the girl began to speak. Then I heard her confession and gave her Holy Communion. I returned home around one o'clock in the morning. In the morning I rose and tried to speak, but no sound came forth. The spirit of muteness had departed from the girl and passed to me. After long prayers the devil finally withdrew from me. From that time I resolved never again to read an exorcism after having eaten.

Some priests say that the sick must strictly fast before exorcisms are read over them. Do you also think so?

Yes, because through prayer and fasting a person is closely united with God and is accordingly open to the action of the Holy Spirit. However, I believe that, unlike exorcists, the sick should fast only for one hour before these prayers.

Are you not afraid when you go to expel the devil?

I always take the Most Holy Mysteries upon my breast when I go to read prayers of adjuration. If Jesus Christ is with me, I fear nothing. Yet the devil has taken vengeance on me several times. I shall recount one instance. This happened in Lviv several years ago, when I was traveling to the town of Komarno to expel an evil spirit. As soon as I approached the car, the rear window suddenly shattered into small fragments; then unexpectedly the alarm activated, which the driver could not shut off in any way. The siren did not cease from the monastery of the Studite Fathers all the way to St. George's Cathedral.

Thus the evil spirit placed obstacles before me, so that I might fear him and not go to that town; nevertheless, I still went and successfully performed the exorcism there. I wish to add, however, that the devil, by his vengeance, has no power to inflict spiritual harm upon a person without that person's consent; yet he can take revenge by causing material losses, just as evil spirits harmed the

inhabitants of the country of the Gerasenes by driving their herd of swine into the sea (cf. Matthew 8:28–32).

The Lord at times permits the evil spirit to inflict material damage upon a person, so that in this way he may have the opportunity to grow in faith, without murmuring and without falling into despair.

Is suicide an action of the evil spirit?

I think that in many cases a person is urged to commit suicide by the devil. As an example, I shall relate the following case.

Once in Skhidnytsia, near Drohobych in the Lviv region, Freemasons held a gathering of members of their organization, and after this an evil spirit took hold there, urging people to suicide. Within a short period of time, about fifty persons in the village ended their lives by hanging. At the request of the villagers, I read exorcisms, celebrated the blessing of water, and organized a large prayer procession throughout the area. After that, thanks be to God, the number of suicides significantly decreased.

I will give another example. I heard from one priest that the daughter of an alcoholic fervently prayed for her father's deliverance from alcohol addiction. The devil took revenge on that girl by urging her to suicide. She was already prepared to do so, but she was saved from this act by the prayer of the Rosary, which her relatives

and friends were praying at that very time. By the power of sincere prayer, the evil spirit of suicide departed from the girl.

However, I wish to say that some cases of suicide are not the result of the action of the evil spirit, but are caused by mental illness. If a psychiatrist confirms the psychological instability of the person who took his own life, then the Catholic Church permits the celebration of a church funeral.

The cunning of the prince of this world
(interview with Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi)

"Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour"

(1 Peter 5:8).

Recently many so-called healers and psychics have appeared in Ukraine, claiming that they can cure any illness. Do you agree that they are servants of the devil?

If people knew by what means those "healers" treat illnesses and what consequences arise from it, they would never seek their help. Often, after their healing sessions, a person is cured of one illness but falls ill with another, because the diseased organ draws energy from a healthy one. After such "treatments" many people suffer

psychological disorders. A lengthy article about such self-appointed healers was published in the journal *Missionary* (nos. 7–8, 2003).

A Christian who goes to be "treated" by healers or psychics enters into contact with unclean powers and thereby betrays Jesus Christ and his faith in Him. I have heard that we already have some Turk who allegedly cures any illness. I tell people that by going to be treated by a pagan connected with the devil, they cease to be Christians in any meaningful sense.

First people go to the servants of the devil seeking help, and then, when that does not help, they turn to a priest, begging the Lord for deliverance. Afterward they must long implore God to obtain forgiveness from Him, and even healing, if such be His holy will.

After those sessions people buy photographs of self-appointed healers and do not even suspect that together with them they are bringing an evil spirit into their homes. They think that psychics or fortune-tellers will help them recover. But this is not so. The following case may serve as an example.

A woman worked with me at the sanitary-epidemiological station. To her neighbor, who could not walk, some psychic from Kyiv came and truly worked a "miracle": the woman walked for two weeks, even without a cane. However, after that "treatment" she could not even rise from her bed. The devil will perform some miracle for a

week, even for a month, in order to entice a person; but later that person falls ill with an even worse disease.

Holy Church forbids the faithful to go to all manner of psychics and fortune-tellers. Already in the Old Testament God revealed through the prophet Isaiah to His people: "I make void the signs of diviners, and turn wise men backward, and make their knowledge foolish" (Isaiah 44:25).

They say that psychics, who are ordinary laypeople—and some of them even non-Christians—"bless" water. Have you heard of such a phenomenon?

Yes, I have heard of this. However, I always tell the faithful that God's grace does not descend upon such water; worse still, it becomes an instrument of the devil. I advise people not to use water that has been "blessed" by anyone other than a priest, because it will bring them only harmful consequences.

We know of such healers who pray, keep icons in their homes, direct people to confession, and even do not take money for their services, yet still arouse suspicion by their actions. What do you think about this?

To some priests, consecrated persons, and also to laypeople, the Lord grants the grace to heal the sick. However, all of them must observe the words of Jesus Christ, who said that whatever they have

received freely, they must give freely. When a person abuses God's gifts, the Lord takes them away from him. Then very often some people pass from the ranks of God's instruments into the ranks of the servants of the devil, beginning to engage in "white" or "black" magic.

Representatives of "white" magic often do not themselves realize that they have fallen under the power of the devil. They continue to pray, advise the sick to go to church and frequently receive the Holy Mysteries, yet they begin to employ various magical methods (for example, pouring molten wax, removing the evil eye by means of matches, and the like), that is, they combine prayer with various pre-Christian (pagan) customs and superstitions.

Very often practitioners of "white" magic instill fear in people, telling them that someone has "worked magic" upon them, thus stirring up mutual hostility among neighbors and relatives. The more a person believes that something has been "done" to him, the more it truly can be done to him. A person who lives in the grace of God should have no fear that someone might "work magic" against him or "bewitch" him.

What is the difference between "black" magic and "white" magic?

Representatives of "black" magic, as I have already said, always seek to harm a person, unlike representatives of "white" magic, who wish to help him; yet the result of their actions is also harmful to him. However, both in "black" and in "white" magic various magical acts are performed, which take place through the assistance of the evil spirit.

"Black" magic is direct service to the devil. It usually instills fear of failures, misfortunes, various difficulties and troubles; it arouses excessive curiosity about the future, a desire to know things which God has hidden for man's own good, a desire for power, and a striving for success, fame, and wealth at any cost (for example, at the cost of the suffering or even the life of others).

Among the practitioners of "black" magic are those who engage in fortune-telling, astrology, chiromancy, spiritism, hypnosis, Satanism, and the like. They attempt to offend or despise God; they receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ while remaining in sin; they make insincere confessions, concealing their sins; and Satanists even break crosses, smash tabernacles, and profane the Most Holy Mysteries.

In the village of Solonka near Lviv, there is an Orthodox priest who supposedly heals people, but, as people say, "he does not heal but maims." You have certainly heard of him. What can you say about this?

The healing practices of some people, even priests, sometimes have negative consequences. Such persons are like a tree that bears bad fruit, and according to the teaching of the Gospel it must be considered bad: "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (cf. Matthew 7:17). This is discussed at length in the journal *Missionary* (no. 2, 2003).

People come to me and say that this priest even allows people to look into the chalice. But why should this be done? We know that the chalice contains the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and that we receive Him in Holy Communion. I tell people that they receive our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Most Holy Eucharist, and He already abides in their hearts—so why should they still peer into the chalice?

I was even told that he claims that I am already old and therefore handed over to him the gift of healing. But I do not even know him, nor can I hand anything over to anyone, not even to a Catholic priest. Permission to read exorcisms is given by a bishop, and the gift of healing is granted by God. What he says is untrue; and if a-

priest speaks falsehood, then he is no longer a servant of God and is not doing God's work.

What should Christians do so that fortune-tellers cannot harm them?

I have already mentioned that the best protection for believers against the servants of the devil is life in the grace of God—that is, the observance of God's commandments, frequent reception of the Holy Mysteries, and the practice of fasting and prayer.

Fortune-tellers often tell people that some misfortune or sorrow has befallen them because neighbors or relatives have "worked something" against them. They say this in order to sow hatred and anger among people, and that is precisely what the devil desires.

Practicing Christians should not fear that someone has "worked magic" against them—for example, by burying some bones under their house or pouring "dead water" under their threshold. Even if people do find something suspicious, they should throw it away, sprinkle that place with holy water, and then no diabolical incantation has any power. God's power is almighty. Let people fear nothing, for without God's permission not even a hair will fall from their head.

Jesus forgave those who tortured and crucified Him, and prayed for them, saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So we too must forgive everyone, and God will

reward us for this; and those who have "worked evil" against us, God Himself will judge. God is a just judge: He rewards good and punishes evil.

Two editions of a booklet have already been published under the titles *I Heal by Prayer* and *Healing by Prayer*, containing material about your life and activity. It is known that Volodymyr Hromyk published them without your knowledge or permission. In these booklets it is stated that you allow people to pour wax, lead, and the like. Is this true?

When the publishers were preparing those editions for print, I did not even know what was written in them. I believe that before publishing those booklets, the compilers should have shown me the final version of the text; then I would have pointed out that there was an error.

The compilers incorrectly quoted my words regarding the pouring of wax. I have never approved of this, nor have I ever sent anyone to fortune-tellers who remove the evil eye, fright, and the like by pouring wax. I may have said that on the Feast of Theophany, during the blessing of water, the priest extinguishes candles in the water and then the wax floats, but no one divines from it, nor draws any conclusions from the figures that appear.

Are sects a product of the devil?
To a certain extent, yes. Sects are created by people under the influence of the evil spirit. This is not God's work, because sects divide the Church, and Jesus clearly said that there must be one flock (cf. John 10:16).

The very word *sect* comes from the Latin *secere*, which means "to cut into pieces one whole." Thus every sect tears away some portion of the faithful from the Church of Christ, proclaiming itself the only true church, and even asserting that only its members will attain salvation. Sectarians deceive people with their false teachings, denying the true doctrine of the Church concerning the Holy Mysteries, the Most Holy Mother of God, the veneration of icons, rejecting Sacred Tradition, the supreme spiritual authority of the Pope of Rome, and the like.

A Christian who joins a sect is in fact seeking salvation apart from the Savior, and truth apart from the one Teacher, as the well-known exorcist Fr. Gabriele Amorth says. The devil wishes to rule over all people, and therefore he employs a cunning tactic expressed in the Latin saying: *divide et impera*—divide and rule. From the very beginnings of the Church he has sought to divide it into various small groups, creating opposition and hostility in order to destroy the Church of Christ, which is God's work. But when Christ founded the Church, He assured us that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (cf. Matthew 16:18).

Many people have departed from the Church of Christ and gone into sects because there they can receive free literature, money for various needs, and the like. By such actions they betray Jesus Christ and His true faith and teaching, just as Judas betrayed Him because of greed for money. Yet Judas made no use of that money; in despair he threw it into the temple before the Jewish high priests and afterward hanged himself. Judas lacked the courage to go to Jesus Christ beneath the cross and ask Him for forgiveness. And I am convinced that if he had done so, Jesus would have forgiven him everything. Then Judas would have become a fervent apostle, preaching to people and warning them not to be as greedy as he had been.

Sects were founded by proud and disobedient people who rejected the teaching authority of the Church, such as Arius, Macedonius, Apollinaris, and in the late Middle Ages Martin Luther and his numerous followers.

In more recent times many preachers of Krishnaism, Buddhism, and other Eastern religions have appeared in Ukraine, and Islam has also spread considerably. The followers of Muhammad have committed much evil on our lands, particularly, as we know, during the Tatar-Mongol invasions, when they spread their faith by fire and sword, acting according to the principle of so-called holy war, *jihad*: the more non-Muslims you kill, the sooner you will reach heaven. But that leads not to heaven, but to hell.

I call all people who have gone into sects to repentance and conversion, recalling the words of Christ: "Repent, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Let people beg God's forgiveness and zealously adhere to the teaching of Holy Church, and they shall be saved; and after death a great reward will await them in heaven.

Have there been cases when, through your prayers, people who had been drawn into sects or by preachers of non-Christian religions returned to the true faith of Christ?

Yes, I even know of one young man who joined the Krishnaite sect, and shortly thereafter he was placed in a psychiatric hospital. His parents called me to save their son. In conversation with him I said: "My child, that is a diabolical faith, a pagan one—how could you go into that sect?" After a sincere conversation he repented and returned to the Catholic Church, made his confession, and received Holy Communion. After that I read prayers over him for healing, and on the second or third day he was discharged from the hospital completely healthy.

Is rock music connected with diabolical power?

I believe that rock music is satanic. In this music one senses an echo of satanic orgies, and very often it draws its fans into alcohol and drug addiction.

Rock music leads to disorders of the human nervous system. People say that they go to discos in order to relax. But I advise them to go

to church to calm their nerves. Let them sing there together with others, take part in the divine services, confess, and receive the Eucharistic Jesus. In this way inner peace and calm will gradually return to them. Even if distractions arise during prayer, let them ask Jesus Christ as Peter did when he began to sink: "Lord, save me!" And the Lord will not delay in stretching out His hand to help them, as He helped Peter, saving him from the stormy waves.

People must never place excessive trust in themselves. Peter assured Christ that he was ready to suffer for Him, even to die. And what happened? Peter denied Him three times. Had he asked Jesus for help, perhaps this would not have happened; but instead he relied on himself with self-confidence.

I often say that people should not rely on their own strength, for by their own strength they can only commit sin. Therefore they must constantly ask the Lord God for help. They watch various immoral films, action movies and horror films, read evil books, and then when they come to church they can no longer pray, because the devil has already planted some sinful thought in them. Often people themselves are to blame for the distractions they experience during the Divine Liturgy. One of the commandments of the Church forbids the reading of evil books. To this one must add that it is also forbidden to watch evil films and corrupt television programs.

In many television programs and films there is cunningly inserted the so-called twenty-fifth frame, which only the subconscious can

perceive. This is a diabolical means of leading people onto a false path—that is, toward sin and away from God. Even during prayer this twenty-fifth frame comes to people's minds in the form of temptation. I read very well about the harmfulness of television in an article by Archimandrite Raphael, published in the journal *Missionary* (no. 10, 2002).

People often ask whether one may inquire about one's future from clairvoyants and fortune-tellers. What do you think about this?

People always wish to know their future, and therefore they often turn for help to fortune-tellers, who are servants of the devil. They learn these things not from God, to whom alone the true future of people is known, but from the evil spirit, who knows something of their past and even of their future.

By God's will, a person is meant to have a good and happy future, but the Lord has concealed from each of us what our path to happiness will be. Many people would like to avoid suffering and incurable illnesses, and for this reason they turn to various fortune-tellers or clairvoyants, hoping that they will help them. But by such actions they do not make their path easier; on the contrary, they make it worse, because they step onto a forbidden path that leads not to happiness, but to destruction.

No one should inquire about his fate through cards, crystal balls, palms, or the like. People should place their present destiny into

God's hands and completely entrust their future to Divine Providence, fulfilling His will and remaining at peace, knowing that they are walking on the right path.

To go to fortune-tellers and inquire about what awaits us is a sin. Holy Church forbids all forms of divination, including card reading. From fortune-telling by cards a person learns nothing, because it is the devil who cunningly acts so as to draw the person away from God. In confession I tell a person who practices card divination first to burn the cards, and only then to come and confess.

One must trust God, not the devil. If a person is experiencing some sorrow, let him place his hope in God and ask His blessing. In the Holy Gospel it is said: "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other" (cf. Luke 16:13).

Astrologers assure people that a person's fate depends on the movement of the planets, the arrangement of the stars, and the like. In horoscopes they predict a person's future for the next day, week, or year. Yet God created man, gave him reason and free will; therefore, man himself shapes his destiny, and no natural phenomena are capable of determining his future.

However, it is claimed that the predictions of soothsayers in most cases come true. Is this true?

Yes, and this can be explained by the fact that the devil has not ceased to be a spirit who nevertheless knows more than man. He cunningly uses this knowledge to deceive a person and, together with some element of truth, to present him with falsehood. The devil does this through his servants—fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and the like.

In the Acts of the Apostles mention is made of the sorcerer Simon, who "used sorcery and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that he himself was some great one," and of the maid who "had a spirit of divination, and brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." Yet all of this they did by the power of the devil, for when the demon was cast out of them, they no longer possessed those abilities.

What do you think about hypnosis?

Some people who possess strong personal energy can influence others, that is, hypnotize them. However, no one has the right to interfere with another person's subconscious, that is, to hypnotize someone; likewise, one must not knowingly submit oneself to hypnosis.

In a state of hypnosis, a person is subject to the one who has hypnotized him, and then his mind and will can easily be

controlled. Holy Church firmly condemns hypnosis and considers it a sin. There also exist various forms of "coding" a person, which are carried out with the help of evil spirits. Only exorcists can remove such codings by the power of God.

Why must one not engage in spiritism?

Spiritism consists in summoning evil spirits and the souls of deceased sinners condemned to eternal punishment, who are under the power of the devil. Spiritism is usually practiced by people who, out of unhealthy curiosity, wish to obtain answers to questions about their future.

This summoning is similar to, yet fundamentally opposed to, the Christian practice of communion with the other world through prayer, by which a person communicates with God, as well as with the saints or with souls suffering in purgatory. Such communication with the other world is mentioned by Jesus Christ in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Luke 16:19–31).

During spiritist séances one may hear various knockings and see objects move. Often spiritists, having summoned a soul from hell or an evil spirit, are then unable to get rid of them. As a result, such people develop insomnia, fear, and may even experience manifestations of madness and the like. Not infrequently, participation in these séances undermines the health of a person's soul and body, because he falls under the influence of the devil.

Holy Church forbids the faithful to engage in spiritism, considering it a grave sin against the First Commandment of God. This practice was, in fact, already forbidden in the Old Testament, when the Lord addressed His chosen people through His prophet with these words: "Neither let there be found among you any one that consulteth ghosts... or seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things" (Deuteronomy 18:11–12).

People who engage in spiritism are deceived by the evil spirit, because at times he does speak the truth. Proof of this can be found in the Gospel according to Saint Mark (cf. 3:11–12), where demons revealed the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus did not deny this, but He forbade them to speak of it. Nevertheless, in most cases the devil is a liar, "the father of lies," yet adherents of spiritism accept everything they learn from him as truth.

Christians must not seek the services of spiritists, for by doing so they weaken their faith in the one true God and become victims of the devil. That we should not trifle with the devil and his cunning followers, nor expose ourselves to danger, is also warned by our Divine Savior: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Chapter Six

Means of Healing of Soul and Body
(Counsels of Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi)

"When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer reached You"

(Jonah 2:8).

The Holy Mysteries of Penance and the Most Holy Eucharist

Over several decades of my priestly ministry, I have become convinced that very often the evil spirit gains power over people through a bad confession. At times people are ashamed to confess that they lived a sexual life before marriage, conceal sins such as relations with animals, abortions, and the like. For this reason, I always emphasize that people must not conceal sins in confession, because such confessions are sacrilegious. In such a confession a person does not reconcile with God but rather insults Him, because he attempts to deceive Him. A human being may be deceived, but God cannot.

People go to various fortune-tellers, extrasensory healers, and visit all kinds of sects. As a result, the devil increasingly gains power over them; fear arises in them, followed by an aversion to going to church and receiving the Holy Mysteries. The greatest protection against the influence of the devil is holy Confession and holy Communion.

The Novena

One of my close relatives fell ill with cancer and suffered very severe pain. The doctors told him that he would live no more than half a year. I then advised him, over the course of nine first Saturdays of each month, to go to confession, receive holy Communion, read about the life of the Mother of God, and pray the Rosary for his healing. And a miracle occurred. He was completely healed and now gives thanks to God for this miraculous healing, as Saint Apostle Paul exhorted the faithful: "Give thanks in all things; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

I have told many people about this miracle that occurred in my family. To all who suffer some misfortune or sorrow, I advise them to do the same on each first Saturday for nine consecutive months. Why nine? Because the nine angelic choirs continually glorify God. Just as on the first Friday of each month we honor the Most Sacred Heart of Christ, asking Jesus Christ for health, so on the first Saturday of the month we sincerely implore the intercession of the Mother of God and believe that our Heavenly Mother will help us, because, as we sing in the hymn, "it has never been heard that she failed to help."

The mother of one priest was gravely ill with cancer. The doctors said that she would die within two or three months. I advised her to pray this novena. And a miracle occurred. She recovered, and

afterward she told me that she was already praying the tenth novena in thanksgiving to God for her healing.

To one woman I advised praying the novena so that her husband would stop drinking and return to her, because he had gone to live with another woman. And it happened that while she was still praying the novena, her husband returned to her and no longer drinks.

There have been many such miraculous healings and conversions. Therefore, I advise people to pray to the Mother of God and to ask her help through this novena. Truly, numerous miracles occur through the intercession of the Most Pure Virgin Mary.

However, if someone has begun to pray the novena, he must, for the entire nine months, go to holy Confession and receive holy Communion. If a person misses, for example, the first Saturday of the eighth month, he must begin the novena again, because his intention has remained unfulfilled. Nevertheless, an unfinished novena has not been in vain, for through those prayers the person has glorified the Lord God.

And if someone is healed, let him give thanks to God for it. Jesus Christ healed ten lepers, and only one returned to give Him thanks (cf. Luke 17:11–19). Therefore, let no one resemble the nine ungrateful lepers.

If God bestows His grace and a person is healed during the praying of the novena, I advise completing it nonetheless, and in this way giving thanks to God for one's healing.

Anointing and Rubbing with Holy Water and Oil

I always advise people to massage the afflicted parts of the body with holy water or oil. And it may happen that the Lord will work a miracle: "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (cf. Mark 10:27).

Before the massage, let the person pray three times the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*, and then massage the painful areas, such as the hands, legs, abdomen, throat, and so forth. And the person who is being massaged should likewise pray and ask God for healing. Thus, common prayer will bring help. Jesus Christ said: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

To the gravely ill, the dying, and the unconscious, the priest administers the holy Mystery of Anointing with Oil, through which not only are the sick person's sins forgiven, but relief is granted and very often even healing: "Is any sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14).

Pilgrimage

In Christianity, pilgrimage on foot to places of indulgence has long been highly esteemed, where the Lord worked numerous miracles, strengthening the faith of the people. These places became renowned for their annual pilgrimages attended by great multitudes. In Ukraine there are many such places, among them the well-known Krekhiv, Hoshiv, Zarvanytsia, Univ, Pochaiv, and others.

Even in the Old Testament, pilgrimages were practiced among the Jews. In the Gospel according to Saint Luke it is mentioned that the Most Holy Mother of God and Saint Joseph went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where the one and only temple for the entire people of Israel was located (Luke 2:41). In the Acts of the Apostles there is also mention of a pilgrimage to a holy place by a Jew from the diaspora (Acts 8:27).

Pilgrimage is a form of penance imposed upon a person by a spiritual father. As a rule, it consists of a journey on foot to a place of indulgence or a monastery, participation in the Divine Liturgy, and the reception of the holy Mysteries of Penance and the Most Holy Eucharist. The pilgrim, regardless of heat, rain, or wind, does not complain during the pilgrimage and does not seek comfort. Such a pilgrimage usually lifts the burden from a person's soul and strengthens him in faith.

I always encourage the faithful to take part in such pilgrimages. If a person walks on foot, God will count every step, and through fatigue the person atones for the consequences of his sins or may offer it for the shortening of the temporal punishments of the souls in purgatory. Through pilgrimage, his purgatory will at least in part be reckoned to him already here on earth.

Chapter 7
Testimonies of the Healed

"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"

(Psalm 118:23).

We present several testimonies concerning the healing of the sick, which Almighty God accomplished through the intercession of the Mother of God, all the angels and saints, and through the prayers of Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi. We await your responses and new testimonies of healing, which we shall publish in the second edition.

Fr. Ihor Lazorko (village of Veryn, Mykolaiv District, Lviv region).

Three years ago I was given a terrifying diagnosis: large-cell high-grade non-Hodgkin lymphoma of the throat (a severe form of

cancer). Two years of intensive treatment in an oncology hospital brought no results. Surgical intervention at the medical institute only worsened my condition. I underwent six courses of chemotherapy and twenty-eight sessions of radiation therapy, but nothing helped. One elderly physician said that with such an illness only God could help.

After prolonged prayers over me, Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi administered to me the holy Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Soon thereafter the malignant tumor disappeared, and the doctors were greatly astonished, asking me by what means I had been treated.

I am immeasurably grateful for my healing from this severe and incurable illness to the Lord God, the Mother of God, and the heavenly intercessors for their protection, and also to Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi for his fervent prayers.

Fr. Oleksandr, pastor of the Church of St. Michael (Mukachevo).

Through the intercession of Blessed Hieromartyr Mykola Charnetskyi and through the prayers of Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi, the Lord God healed me of a terrible illness—prostatitis and cystitis.

Yevheniia Khrushch, born 1936 (Lviv).

I suffered three heart attacks and underwent nine different surgeries. The doctors gave me no hope of recovery. Everyone knew that my days were numbered. This illness was a great burden upon my soul. One day a saving thought came to me: that if I could see Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi, I would fall at his feet, as Mary Magdalene once fell at the feet of Jesus Christ. And so it happened. The priest heard my confession, and for five days thereafter I received Holy Communion. Through the Holy Mysteries and the prayers of Fr. Vasyl, I became healthy. Years have passed, and to this day I can hardly believe that I was once so ill and that my life hung by a thread.

Natalia Tserlekevych, born 1983, student of the Ukrainian Catholic University and the Lviv Academy of Arts.

Several years ago doctors gave me a dreadful diagnosis: viral meningoencephalitis (damage to the brain) as a complication after influenza. For five days I was unconscious, during which the functions of vital organs were disrupted and adverse changes occurred in the nervous system. Doctors said that even if I were to regain consciousness, I would be mentally ill.

Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi read prayers for healing and an exorcism over me, as a result of which I completely recovered. Now I paint and write poetry.

Olena Alokhina, born 1958 (Lviv).

For a long time my legs were in pain; doctors said that surgery on my veins was necessary, but I did not consent to surgical intervention. With great faith in God's help, I repeatedly attended prayers with Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi at the Church of St. Michael in Lviv, and soon I became healthy.

Svitlana Velychko, born 1971 (Vynnyky near Lviv).

When I was nine years old, an operation on my tonsils was performed unsuccessfully, and a nerve was carelessly damaged. From that time I developed epilepsy. During frequent seizures, which lasted up to three hours, I lost consciousness. For eighteen years I was treated at a neurological dispensary, after which I was assigned a second-degree disability. At the same time I firmly believed that through the prayers of Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi I would be healed—and so it happened. For my healing from this long-standing illness I sincerely thank God and His faithful servant Fr. Vasyl, who prayed over me many times with heartfelt devotion.

Vira Chyzh, Candidate of Medical Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Family Medicine, Lviv State University named after Danylo Halytskyi.

Divine Providence brought me together with Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi when he himself was undergoing treatment at the emergency hospital in Lviv. This was a very dramatic period for my family: my husband became gravely ill, and doctors said he would live no more

than three weeks. Through the prayers of Fr. Vasyl, my husband lived for more than a year longer.

Natalia Shumska, born 1980, student of the Lviv Academy of Trade and Economics.

I became gravely ill. For a month my entire body hurt so severely that I could not rise from bed. Doctors were unable to establish a diagnosis. After Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi prayed over me, heard my confession, and gave me Holy Communion, I felt relief, and within a few days I was completely restored to health.

Afterword

We thank God that this small book has seen the light of day on the eve of the jubilee of the 45th anniversary of the priesthood and the 75th anniversary of the life of Fr. Vasyl Volodymyr Voronovskyi of the Studite Rule. May it contribute to the glory of God throughout the world and to the spiritual growth of His children in Ukraine and beyond.

We express our sincere gratitude to all who, through prayer or material support, contributed to the publication of this book, in particular to the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Ukraine, Mr. Volodymyr Kozhan, who sponsored its publication, and to Ms. Olha Hosh for her assistance in gathering the materials.

We also express our heartfelt thanks in advance to all who will assist in the distribution of this book, so that it may reach the hands of a great number of the faithful and encourage many not to seek the services of self-proclaimed psychics, healers, and clairvoyants, but rather to turn to the Lord and to His faithful servants in our Holy Church.

Let us pray to Almighty God that He may strengthen those among us who are weak in faith, establish those who are infirm in spirit, convert the lost, and not turn away from anyone who comes to Him, invoking His holy name.

Photos of Father Vasyl Voronovskyi

що їм екстрасенси чи ворожбити допоможуть оздоровитися. А це зовсім не так. Прикладом цього може бути такий випадок.

Зі мною працювала в санепідемстанції одна жінка. До її сусідки, яка не могла ходити, приїхав якийсь екстрасенс з Києва, який дійсно зробив "чудо": жінка два тижні ходила, навіть без костура. Однак після того "лікування" вона навіть з ліжка не могла піднятися. Диявол зробить якесь чудо на тиждень, хай навіть і на місяць, щоб заманити людину. Але пізніше ця людина захворює на ще гіршу недугу.

Св. Церква забороняє вірним ходити до всіляких екстрасенсів і ворожбитів. Ще в Старому Завіті Бог через пророка Ісаю об'явив Своєму народові: "Я обертаю на ніщо знаки віщунів, ворожбитів збиваю з пантелику" (Іс 44, 25).

Кажуть, що екстрасенси, які є звичайними мирянами, а деякі з них навіть нехристиянами, посвячують воду. Чи Ви чули про таке явище?

Так, я чув про це, однак, я завжди кажу вірним, що на таку воду не зійшла Божа благодать, гірше того, вона стає знаряддям диявола. Я раджу людям не користуватися водою, яку посвячував не священик, бо вона принесе їм тільки шкідливі наслідки.

Знаємо таких цілителів, які моляться, мають в хаті ікони, скеровують людей до сповіді, навіть грошей не беруть за свої послуги, а все ж таки викликають підозру своїми діями. Що Ви про це думаєте?

Декотрим священикам, богопосвяченим особам і також мирянам Господь дає ласку зцілювати хворих. Однак усі вони повинні виконувати слова Ісуса Христа, Який сказав, що все, що даром отримали, слід даром і віддавати. Коли людина зловживає Божими дарами, то Господь від неї відбирає їх. І тоді дуже часто декотрі люди переходять з рядів Божих посередників у ряди

Я між людьми, о Господи, буду Тебе хвалити і між народами буду Тобі співати (Пс 57, 10).

[1] Kseniya Voronovska — the mother of Fr. Vasyl and Bishop Julian. **[2]** Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi together with his mother in Truskavets (1966). **[3]** Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi's biological brother Mykhailo among students of an evening school in Lviv. **[4]** Vasyl Voronovskyi together with his mother at the wedding of his cousin Yaroslav Nakonechnyi (the son of his mother's brother) in the village of Humnyska (1950).

[5] The bell tower in the village of Humnyska — the ancestral village of Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi. **[6]** Fr. Vasyl with his biological brother, Kyryiarch Julian, among priests in front of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Drohobych on the day of the conclusion of missions in preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000 (1999). **[7]** The Chapel of the Transfiguration of the Lord in the village of Humnyska — the ancestral village of Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi. **[8]** Studite Hieromonk Vasyl with his biological brother Kyryiarch Julian, Archimandrite of the Studite Rule in Ukraine (Drohobych, 1996). **[9]** The chapel and bell tower built with donations on the site of the parental home in the village of Humnyska, the ancestral village of the Voronovskyi hieromonks — Fr. Vasyl and Bishop Julian. **[10]** Vasyl Voronovskyi near the Chapel of the Transfiguration of the Lord in the village of Humnyska (spring 2003). **[11]** Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi, on the first Sunday of Great Lent, performing the blessing of water over the spring at the site called "Dzhublyk," village of Vilkhivka, Transcarpathia (March 2003).

слуг диявола, починаючи займатися "білою" або "чорною" магією.

Представники "білої" магії часто самі не підозрюють, що опинилися під владою диявола. Вони продовжують молитися, радять хворим ходити до церкви і часто приймати Святі Тайни, але вони починають використовувати різні магічні методи (наприклад, зливання воску, знімання вроків за допомогою сірників тощо), тобто пов'язують молитву з різними дохристиянськими (поганськими) звичаями і забобонами.

Дуже часто представники "білої" магії навіюють людям страх, говорячи про те, що їм "пороблено", призводячи таким чином до взаємної ворожнечі сусідів та родичів. Чим більше людина вірить у те, що їй "пороблено", тим їй дійсно можуть поробити. Людина, яка живе у Божій благодаті, не повинна мати страху перед тим, що їй хтось щось "поробить" чи її "зачарує".

Чим відрізняється "чорна" магія від "білої"?

Представники "чорної" магії, як я вже сказав, завжди прагнуть нашкодити людині, на відміну від представників "білої" магії, які бажають їй допомогти, але результат їхніх дій також шкідливий для неї. Однак як у "чорній", так і у "білій" магіях виконуються різні магічні дії, які відбуваються за допомогою злого духа.

"Чорна" магія – це пряме служіння дияволові, яке звичайно навіює страх перед невдачами, нещастями, різноманітними труднощами і негараздами, викликає надто велике зацікавлення майбутнім, бажання знати речі, які Бог приховав задля добра людини, бажання влади, прагнення успіху, слави, багатства за будь-яку ціну (наприклад, біди чи навіть життя інших людей).

До представників "чорної" магії належать люди, які займаються ворожбитством, астрологією, хіромантією, спіритизмом, гіпнозом, сатанізмом тощо. Вони

Велика бо, як небо, Твоя ласка, і аж до хмар сягає Твоя вірність (Пс 57, 11).

[12] Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi among the people after the blessing of water in the center of the city of Lviv (2000). People always crowd and press around him, just as they once did around Jesus (cf. Luke 8:45).
[13] Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi near the statue of the Mother of God in the Marian chapel in his ancestral village of Humnyska (spring 2003). [14] Fr. Vasyl Voronovskyi after the blessing of the statue of the Most Holy Mother of God at the site called "Dzhublyk," village of Vilkhivka, Transcarpathia, on the first Sunday of Great Lent (March 2003).

Deeply faithful people, even in the most difficult moments of their lives, place their trust in God. In the Holy Gospel we read of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, who came to Jesus at a moment of great distress, when his daughter was dying, and begged Him to save the child. Our Divine Savior said to him: "Do not be afraid; only believe," and He raised the girl to life before the eyes of her parents.

So too I would wish that people, in their illnesses and anxieties, would come to the Lord with the same strong faith. Without true faith in the heart, it is impossible to receive healing of soul and body. And although the devil is stronger than us human beings, Christians who deeply believe in God and recognize His omnipotence have no reason to fear him, for they are armed with the means of grace that the Holy Church gives them as protection against diabolical power.

A believing person should fear only God—or, more precisely, sin, through which one can lose the right to heaven, that is, the inheritance of the children of God. One should not fear illness, poverty, or even death itself, but should look upon everything with the eyes of faith, seeing in all these things instruments in the hands of a good Father, who desires to lead all His wandering children back onto the path of salvation.

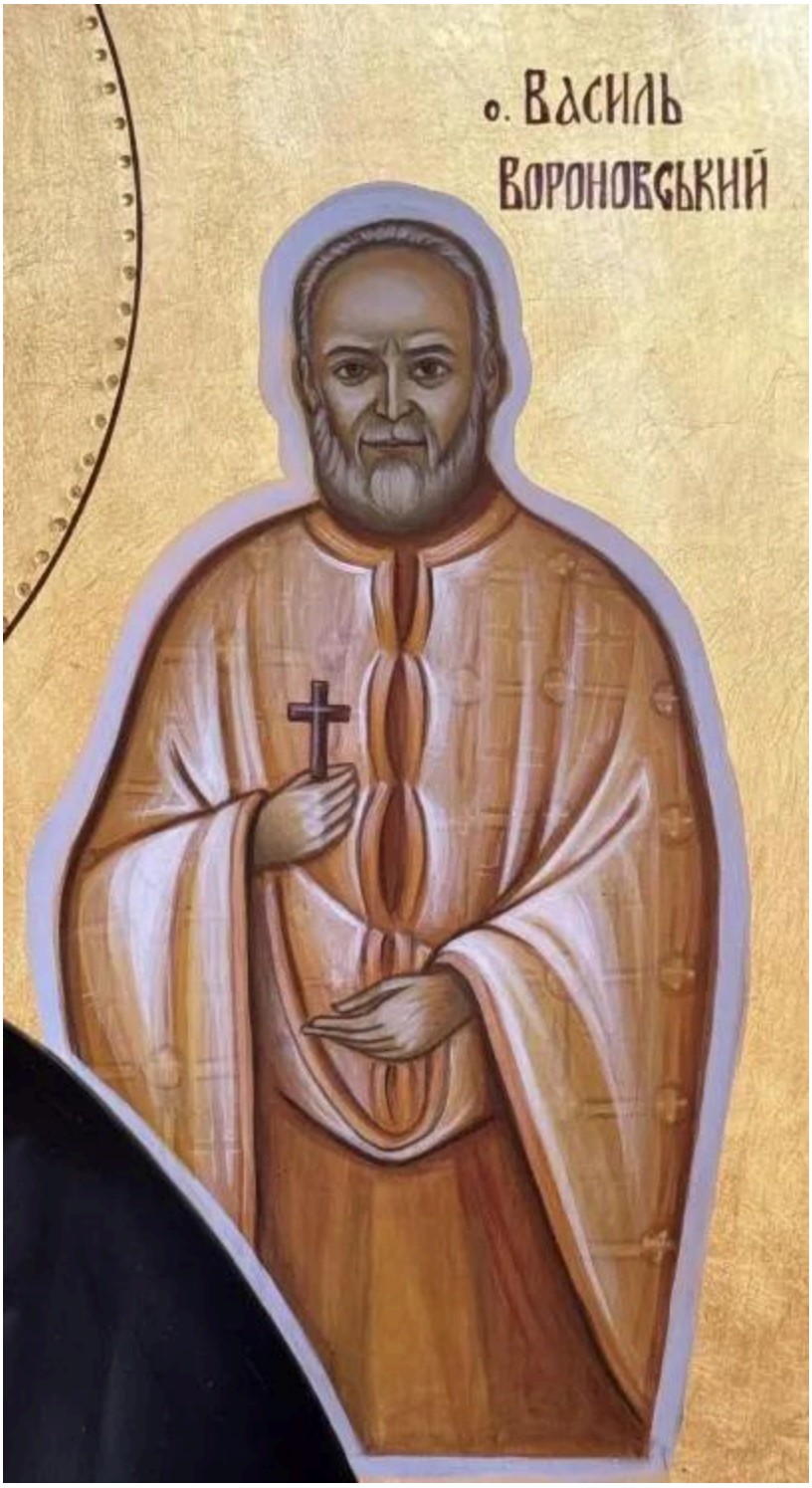
May God grant that all who read this little book be strengthened in true faith in the Triune God, and that those who have gone astray and found deceptive refuge in various sects may return to the bosom of the Holy Church.

- **Hieromonk Vasyl Volodymyr Voronovskyi**
  of the Studites

A Final Word for The God Fearing People of Busk, Lviv

A special and heartfelt thanks is owed to the good people of Busk! If you have made it this far into the collection, I humbly ask that you offer a prayer for these kind people (perhaps even to Fr. Vasyl Voronovsky). Well over half of the materials were provided through their kindness and their love for their "fellow countryman" Fr. Vasyl. When I reached out for their archives, I was met with great kindness, patience, and goodwill. Despite technological and circumstantial difficulties they delivered quickly! They went so far as to scan the book from scratch for all of us.

May God bless them abundantly, and may the prayers of those who benefit from this work return to them a hundredfold. Please all of you, offer a prayer for the repose of Bohdan Lytvyn. He was "the first programmer of Busk and Lviv." This man scanned and uploaded "НЕ БІЙСЯ, ТІЛЬКИ ВІР/Do Not Be Afraid, Only Believe." I spoke to his sister, Maria, who was crucial in supplying these materials.


о. Василь
Вороновський